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IOHN KETTLEWELL. B.D.

A N

HELP and EXHORTATION

TO

Worthy Communicating.

OR, A

TREATISE

Describing the

MEANING, Worthy RECEPTION, DUTY, and BENEFITS

OF THE

HOLY SACRAMENT,

A N D

Answering the *Doubts* of *Conscience*, and *other Reasons*, which most generally detain Men from it.

Together with Suitable

DEVOTIONS

A D D E D.

By *JOHN KETTLEWELL*, B. D.
Vicar of *Cole*'s-*Hill*, in *Warwickshire*.

The TENTH EDITION, Corrected.

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[Price Four Shillings.]

TO THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

SIMON Lord *DIGBY*,

BARON *DIGBY*,

OF

GEASHILL.

MY LORD,

THE HOLY EUCHARIST is a Rite of the greateſt Honour and Endearment that ever *God* vouchſafed to *Men*, and the moſt ſublime and bliſsful Inſtance of our Communion with him. For therein he calls us to his own *Table*, not to attend as *Servants*, but to feaſt with him as his *Friends*:

He treats us with the moſt magnificent Fare, preſenting That to us for our Food, which one would think were not to be *Eaten*, but *Adored*, even the moſt ſacred *Body* and *Blood* of his own *Son*, in which he conveys to us all the Benefits of our Redemption. And being thus apt to excite in us the higheſt Devotion, and to inrich us with the greateſt Fulneſs of Grace and Bleſſing, one would expect it ſhould be had in Reverence, and moſt thankfully received by every Chriſtian.

But yet in *our Days*, what Part of *Religion* doth ſo generally ſuffer, or is ſo univerſally neglected among Men? For the greateſt Numbers have either little or no *Reverence* at all for it, or too much, which makes them afraid of it. They neglect it thro' Careleſſneſs and cauſeleſs Scruples, or profane it by unworthy and diſreſpectful Uſage: So that among all the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity, few pay that Honour to their Lord, or ſecure that Benefit to themſelves by receiving, which he intended All ſhould do.

This, My Lord, is the Grief and Complaint of All who have any juſt Honour for their deareſt Saviour, and this venerable Ordinance, or any generous Compaſ-

ſion

ſion for the Souls of others. And that, by the Grace of God, I may help ſomething to redreſs it, I have endeavoured to deſcribe a *Worthy Communicating*, and to ſet out both the Duty and Advantages of it in this Treatiſe, that thereby I may recommend it to the Choice of all who are wiſe, and to the Conſciencies of all who are religious. In the Management whereof I have ſhunned all fruitleſs Diſputes and nice Speculations, ſeeking only to get it Authority among the *Looſe*, and Reverence with the *Careleſs*, and to reconcile it to the *Scrupulous*, and to make the Duty as clear, eaſy, and uſeful as I can to All. Particularly, I have deſigned all along to make it not only an honourable Remembrance of our dear Lord, but a moſt ſolemn and ſtrict Engagement to a good Life in All that uſe it; for then I am ſure they will be infinitely happy in it.

And this Diſcourſe, My noble Lord, I here humbly offer to Your Lordship, deſiring it may ſtand as a public Teſtimony of the great Honour and Affection which I have for thoſe Excellencies that ſhine ſo clear in You. God has endowed Your great Mind with a ſtrong Love and ſteady Choice of Virtue; and, what I have beheld with Pleaſure, with a generous, and, as there is

Place

Place for it, an active Compaſſion for thoſe that want it. You have the true Wiſdom, upon deliberate and well-ſtudied Reaſons, to be religious; and the Courage, in this audacious Age, when Irreligion is ſet up for the only creditable Dreſs, to own it, and ſtudy to be thought ſo. For it is Your LORDSHIP'S Honour to think that nothing can make You greater, than to be an humble Worſhipper, and a faithful Servant of Your holy Saviour. This noble Piety and Zeal for Goodneſs, will endear You, MY LORD, to Almighty God, and to all good Men. And if, by theſe Papers, I may in any wiſe contribute to them, I ſhall think myſelf happy, in having ſerved to ſet on the virtuous Growth of one, whom, I hope, God has ſet out, in a Time which ſo infinitely needs it, for an Illuſtrious Example, that may give both Ornament and Support to Religion.

But beſide this, MY LORD, I have another End in this Dedication; and that is, That theſe Sheets may remain a laſting Monument of my Gratitude, for the endearing Favours which I have received from Your Noble Hand. They were compoſed for the Benefit of a Place where I am now fixed, and whereto I was deſigned

ſigned by Your Generoſity and Nobleneſs, when I thought of nothing leſs. For ſo truly public was Your LORDSHIP'S Spirit in the filling of that Church, that You pitched upon a Perſon whoſe Face You had never known, and who never knew of it, only becauſe You believed that he would make it his Care to promote Religion, and to benefit thoſe Souls which were to be committed to him. And this, MY LORD, I humbly beg Your LORDSHIP'S Leave to mention, not for Your own, but for the Public's Sake. For in this degenerate Age, when either filthy Lucre, or at leaſt ſome other mean and ſordid End, have made a Merchandize, and bred Corruption even in the moſt *ſacred Truſts*, I think the World has Need of ſuch Examples.

I have nothing more to add, but to beg of Almighty GOD, That he, who brings about the nobleſt Ends by the weakeſt and moſt unlikely Inſtruments, would make this Book effectual to his own Honour and Service; and alſo bleſs Your LORDSHIP with a Continuance and Increaſe of all virtuous Excellencies, Honour and Happineſs in this World, till at laſt he ſhall take You to ſhine in his own immortal Glory in the World to come.

This

This is the most hearty Prayer of him, who very much for Your Favours, but more for the true Devotion and Affection which You bear to the GOD and SAVIOUR he serves, is, in all Sincerity,

My Honoured Lord,

Your Lordship's

Most Affectionate,

Obliged Chaplain,

and Humble Servant,

From Your Lordship's House near *Cole's-Hill*, *June* 27, 1683.

John Kettlewell.

AN

AN

HELP

AND

EXHORTATION

TO

Worthy Communicating.

The INTRODUCTION.

IN this Matter of the Holy Sacrament of the *Lord's Supper*, there are two great Faults which are every where incurr'd, and which all who Love their Saviour, or their own Souls, ought moſt carefully to avoid; and they are, a *Refuſal* or *Neglect*, and an *unworthy Uſage* or *Prophanation* of it; both which are moſt offenſive to Almighty God, and to our dear Lord. For our bleſſed Saviour has appointed it, and expreſly commanded us to come to it, and ſhew'd us, by manifeſt Tokens, that he lays a particular Weight upon the ſame, ſo that we are greatly undutiful and diſobedient if we keep back from it: And he has appointed it for

ſacred Ends and ſolemn Purpoſes, which call for a very reverent and devout Carriage; ſo that we prophane it, if we come careleſsly, and behave ourſelves unworthily when we approach thereto. It is a moſt *neceſſary* Part of our Religion, and therefore not to be paſſed over, and let alone through Negligence; and a moſt *aweful* one, and therefore not to be perform'd with Diſreſpect, and irreverent Carriage. So that we muſt be careful, both to partake of this Holy Feaſt when we are called to it, and to come to it worthily when we do. And this St. *Paul* preſcribes concerning it, 1 *Cor.* xi. *Let a Man examine himſelf*, ſays he, *and ſo let him eat of that Bread and drink of that Cup.* v. 28. *Let a Man examine himſelf*, *i. e.* let him *approve* himſelf, as the * Word, which here is rendered, *examine*, ſignifies, *v.* 19, † and *Chap.* xvi. *v.* 3. ‡ Let him ſo long try his Fitneſs for it, till he ſees Cauſe to like and approve himſelf, and to think he is worthy of the ſame; for he would not call unworthy Receivers to the Sacrament, but drive them from it, as he doth by telling them the *extream Danger* which they incur thereby, *v.* 27, 29. But when once he is ſo approved, and fit to come to it, then ſays he, let him not forbear the Feaſt, but haſten to partake; *Let him eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup.*

Thus are both a *careleſs Forbearance*, and an *indecent unworthy Uſage* of this Holy Feaſt, great Indignities to our Bleſſed Lord, and criminal Violations of it. It ſuffers on either Hand, ſo that to ſecure it in its juſt Eſteem and due Obſervance, both are carefully to be removed. And to do what Right I can to this Holy Ordinance, and what Service I am able to all ſuch as ſhall ſeek Help from this Treatiſe,

* Δοκιμαζέτω.

† Οἱ δόκιμοι, *that they are approved may be made manifeſt.*

‡ Οὓς ἐὰν δοκιμάσητε, *Whomſoever you ſhall approve.*

I ſhall endeavour, what in me lies, to cure and prevent both, in that which follows.

Now to do this with the greater Clearneſs, in diſcourſing upon this Subject I ſhall do theſe five Things:

1ſt, I ſhall ſhew, *What is the Meaning of eating Bread, and drinking Wine, in the Bleſſed Sacrament.*

2dly, *Wherein the Worthineſs of doing this lies.*

3dly, *How much it is every good Chriſtian's Duty to frequent it.*

4thly, *What great Inducements we have thereto, and how great the Benefits are which come by it, which ſhould make us preſs to it of ourſelves, tho' we were not commanded ſo to do.*

5thly, I ſhall *conſider thoſe Excuſes, and take off thoſe Pleas, which are moſt uſually made by any Perſons againſt coming to the ſame.*

And when all this is done, I think I ſhall have ſaid enough both to invite, and preſs Men to this Feaſt, and alſo to a worthy Partaking thereof, that ſo they may come to it when they are invited, and be welcome and worthy Gueſts when they do.

PART I.

The Meaning of Feasting in the Holy Sacrament.

CHAP. I.

Of the Meaning of our Eating and Drinking in the Holy Sacrament.

The CONTENTS.

Three Ends of Feasting in the Lord's Supper. *The First End is in Remembrance and Commemoration of our* Saviour Christ, *and of his Dying for us. To remember him is not barely to call to Mind that once there was such a Person, but to think of his particular Quality and Relation to us, which are worth remembring, as of his being our most faithful Teacher, our most gracious Governor, our most intire Friend, and noble Benefactor. These Things usually commemorated by Festivals. The Second End is in Confirmation of the* New Covenant, *which he purchased for us by his Death. An Account of the* New Covenant. Christ's *Death purchased the same: It is ratified in the* Holy Sacrament, *which is shown from the same Thing, being done in* Baptism, Circumcision, *and the* Passover *which answered thereto: More particularly,* 1. *From the Words of Institution, wherein the* Cup *is call'd the* New Covenant, *and we are bid to drink of it, which was a* Covenant-Rite; *and the* Bread *is called*

called Christ's Body, *to the same Intent the* Paschal Lamb *was, which was a fœderal Conveyance of it.* 2. *From its being a Feast or Sacrifice, for* Sacrifice *is one Way of Covenanting with God, and by Feasting on it we partake thereof.* 3. *From its conveying the particular* Blessings *of the* New Covenant, *which are not to be had otherwise, than by fœderal Promises, or Performances. The Third End, is in Ratification of a League of Love and Friendship with those* Brethren *that* Communicate *with us therein, and with all others. This Chapter sum'd up.*

FIRST, I shall shew *what is the Meaning of eating Bread, and drinking Wine in the Blessed Sacrament, and what we are to understand by those Actions, and think of them, when we do them.*

When we come to eat Bread and drink Wine in the Holy Sacrament, we must not come only for a Bodily Refreshment, or for Eating and Drinking's Sake, as we do to our common Food: For *this is to Eat*, as St. *Paul* says, *not discerning the Lord's Body*, but as if it were bare ordinary Meat, 1 *Cor.* xi. 29. But we must Eat and Drink with *special Ends*, and *particular Intentions*, which may render our Eating and Drinking not an *ordinary Repast*, but a *religious Feasting* upon the *Body* and *Blood of our Lord.* And these Ends are three:

1*st*, In *Remembrance, and Commemoration of our Saviour Christ, and of his dying for us.*

2*dly*, In *Confirmation of the New Covenant, which he purchased for us by his Death.*

3*dly*, In *Ratification of a League of Love and Friendship, with those Brethren, who Communicate with us therein, and with all others.*

First, We must eat Bread and drink Wine in *Remembrance and Commemoration of our Saviour Christ, and of his Dying for us.* By these Actions, we must be put in Remembrance, and call to Mind ourselves, and commemorate or tell it to others, what a good Friend and Saviour Jesus Christ has been to us, and how at last he died, and gave his own Heart's Blood for our Sakes. And this our blessed Lord expressly ordered, at the Time of Institution; *This do*, says he, both of the *eating Bread*, and *drinking Wine, in Remembrance of me*, 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25.

To *Remember* one, is not barely to *call to Mind*, that once there was *such a Person*; but also to think of their particular *Quality* and *Relation*, what they are to us, or what they have left with us, or what they have done for us which is worth remembring. If we bid a *Servant* remember us, we intend that he should be mindful of the *Commands* which we have left with him; if a *Friend*, that he should bear in Mind the great *Love* and *Faithfulness* which we have always expressed towards him; if one whom we have *highly obliged*, that he should *gratefully* acknowledge, and think of the *Kindnesses* which we have done him; or if *one*, lastly, *whose Favour we desire*, and of whom we have requested any Thing, that he would be mindful of the *good Turn* which he *promises* to do for us, or which we *ask* of him. In desiring any of these or any others, to remember us, we mean not barely that they should call to Mind how once there were such Persons as we in Being; but over and above that, that they be particularly mindful of the Relation wherein we stand towards them, and think of what we have done for them, what we deserve, or what we desire or expect from them.

And

And this our Bleſſed Lord intends, when in this Holy Feaſt he deſires, and commands us to remember him. He would have us think of him in all thoſe Capacities, and reflect upon him under all thoſe Relations, wherein he ſo infinitely deſerves to be remembered by us: Such as are that of a *faithful Teacher*, a *gracious Governor*, an *intire Friend*, and *noble Benefactor*, doing the higheſt Kindneſſes, and working the greateſt Deliverances *for us*, and for all *Mankind*.

1*ſt*, He would have us remember him, as our *faithful Teacher*, who has made known to us the whole Counſel of God concerning us, and to call to Mind thoſe excellent Things which he has revealed to us. As namely, That for the Sake of his Death, and through the Merits of his Blood, all Mankind, who were utter Enemies before, ſhall be put into a Way of Reconciliation with God, and have the Benefit of a New Covenant, which proffers Pardon, to all who truly repent of their Sins; and ſpiritual Help and inward Grace, to all who are careful to endeavour therewith; and the Bleſſings of Heaven, and endleſs Happineſs to all that are entirely obedient; promiſing, that at our Death, our Souls ſhall go into Paradiſe, and that at the General Judgment, our Bodies, which till then were held in their Graves, ſhall be raiſed up again to eternal Life.

2*dly*, He would have us remember him, as our *gracious Governor*, whom God has anointed to give Laws to us; and to recollect, and bear in Mind thoſe Commands, which, as our Sovereign Lord and Maſter, he has laid upon us. As namely, That we love God, and truſt in his Goodneſs, and ſubmit to his Providence, and worſhip him with Prayers and Praiſes, but above all, with an Holy and a God-like Life; that we be humble and heavenly-

minded, chaſte, temperate, and contented; that we be dutiful to our Governors, reſpectful to our Superiors, courteous to our Equals, condeſcenſive to our Inferiors, grateful to our Friends, loving and obliging to our Enemies, and juſt, charitable, and peaceable towards all Perſons, of whatſover Nations, Sects, or Parties, even to all Mankind.

3*dly*, He would have us remember him, as our *moſt entire Friend*, and noble *Benefactor*, who let us ſo deep into his Heart, and heaped his Favours on us at ſo prodigious a Rate, as never was, nor ever will be equall'd. For he loved us, without any Thing of our own Deſerts; and in Spite of our higheſt Provocations; and without expecting any other Recompence, beſides the Pleaſure of being kind to us; and to ſuch a Degree, as made him to forego the greateſt Pleaſures which he might have held without all Interruption in heavenly Places, and to become a Man of Sorrows, and to lead a perſecuted, difficult, and neceſſitous Life; and at laſt to die, a moſt exquiſitely painful, and ignominious Death for our ſakes, which ranſom'd us from the greateſt Curſe, and procured us the moſt valuable Bleſſings that our Nature can admit of. And this Benefit of his Death, being not only in itſelf the coſtlieſt, but the very Price and Purchaſe of all the reſt, he would have remembered above all others in this Feaſt; and accordingly he has ſuited the Food therein, to be broken Bread, and Wine poured out, which do moſt lively repreſent it. *As often as you eat this Bread, and drink this Cup*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *you* exhibit to all who look on and obſerve what you do, or *ſhew* forth *the Lord's Death till he come*, 1 Cor. xi. 26.

Theſe

Theſe are the Things, which our Saviour Chriſt calls us ſeriouſly to remember and conſider of in our own Minds, and which the Actions themſelves commemorate and ſhew forth to others, when we eat Bread and drink Wine in this Holy Sacrament. When we partake of this Feaſt, which he has appointed us, he would have us remember him, and think with ourſelves how *faithful a Teacher* he was to us, and what good Leſſons and Declarations he has left with us; how *gracious a Lord* and Maſter he proved, and what Commandments he has laid upon us; and laſtly, how *kind a Friend*, *and noble Benefactor* he ſhewed himſelf, and what aſtoniſhing Kindneſſes he has done for us in all the Labours of his Life, but eſpecially, and above all, in his ſuffering a bloody Death for our Sakes, which purchaſed for us the Forgiveneſs of our Sins, the Grace and Spirit of God, and eternal Happineſs. All this *faithful Teacher*, and *gracious Governor*, and *entire Friend*, and *noble Benefactor*, the bleſſed Jeſus is, and has approved himſelf to us, in the higheſt Meaſures, and to all imaginable Degrees; and ſince he is ſo, he would have us to bear it in Mind, and oftentimes to think of it. And that we may be ſure to do ſo, he has inſtituted this Feaſt on purpoſe for it, and told us, that our Work is to call him to Mind, and remember him whenſoever we come to it.

And this Way of having theſe Things remembred, by appointing Feaſts for the Commemoration of them, has been very uſual in the World. Thus the *Diſ-

* Πολλῶν γὲν εἰσι φιλοσόφων ἐν ἄσει σωίοδοι, ὧν μὲν Διογνισῶν, ὧν δὲ Ἀντιπατρισῶν λεγομένων, ὧν δὲ Παναιτιασῶν. *Athen. Deipen.* l. 5. c. 1.

Diogeniſtæ, *Antipatriſtæ*, *Panætiaſtæ appellati ſunt, qui ſtato anni Die Diogenis, Antipatri, & Panætii nobilium Philoſophorum memoriam celebrarent.* Iſ. Caſaub. *ad loc. Animadv.* c. 1.

ciples,

ciples, in the several Sects of Philosophers at *Athens*, were wont to have a set Feast and Collation, in Remembrance of their Founders. And it has been the Way of all the World, to remember their Benefactors, and commemorate some great Blessings, by Festivals. Thus at this Day we commemorate the Deliverance from the *Powder Treason*, and the *King's Happy Restoration*, by a yearly Festival upon that Occasion. And the whole *Christian Church* has perpetuated the Memory of *Christ's Nativity*, *Resurrection*, and the *Descent of the Holy Ghost*, by the yearly Feasts of *Christmas*, *Easter*, and *Pentecost*. And God himself in the Old Testament call'd Men to a Remembrance of the *Creation of the World*, by the Feast of the *Seventh Day Sabbath*; and all the *Jews*, to the Commemoration of his sparing all their *First-Born*, when the destroying Angel slew all the First-Born of *Egypt*, by the yearly Festival of the *Passover* appointed for that very Purpose, *Exod.* xii. 14.

This then is the first End of our eating Bread and drinking Wine at the Lord's Table, it is *in Remembrance of our Saviour Christ*, and *of what he has done for us*. So that when we partake in this Feast of his Appointment, we must seriously reflect on him who has appointed it, and bethink ourselves, that he is our faithful Teacher, calling to Mind his Revelations; our sovereign Lord and Master, remembring his Commandments; our entire Friend, Saviour, and Benefactor, who has done strange Things for us; but above all, who has laid down his own Life to purchase for us the Pardon of our Sins, and spiritual Grace, and eternal Happiness, upon our true Repentance, Obedience, and virtuous Endeavours. With these Thoughts he would have us to entertain our *Minds*, at the same Time that we feast our Bodies with

with the Creatures of Bread and Wine, which he has ſpared for us; and if we would anſwer his End in it, and be welcome Gueſts at this Feaſt, when he calls us to it, we muſt be ſure ſo to do.

And as we muſt eat Bread, and drink Wine at the Lord's Table, in Remembrance of our Saviour Chriſt, and of his dying for us; ſo muſt we,

2dly, *In Confirmation of the New Covenant, which he hath purchaſed and procured for us by his Death.*

This Covenant is a mutual *Contract and Engagement between God and us*, and conſiſts of ſeveral Articles agreed to on *God*'s Side, and ſeveral on *ours*. As for *God's Part, to all true Believers, i. e.* to all who believe the Holy Scriptures, and particularly that Part of them, theſe his gracious Promiſes, without a Belief whereof, they will have no Liſt or Encouragement to ſet out about the Performance of the Conditions required on their Parts; to all true Believers, I ſay, he promiſes *three Things, viz.* the *Forgiveneſs of Sins, the Aſſiſtance of his Spirit*, and *eternal Happineſs*. Anſwerably on *their Parts*, they promiſe *three* more, which three indeed are ſum'd up in one, *i. e.* the laſt of them: And thoſe are, to *Repent of their Sins, to Endeavour with his Grace*, and *to Obey all his Commandments*.

He Promiſes to *forgive them all their Sins*. For this is one Article of the New Covenant, as the Apoſtle relates it, *Heb.* viii. *This is the Covenant which I will make with them in thoſe Days, I will be merciful to their Unrighteouſneſs, and their Sins and Iniquities will I remember no more*, v. 10, 12. But then at the ſame Time he expects, and accordingly they promiſe, that they will *repent of them*, and *forſake them*. For he orders *Repentance* and *Remiſſion of Sins* to be preach'd both together, *Luke* xxvi. *That Repentance and Remiſſion of Sins, ſhould be preached*

preached in his Name to all Nations, v. 47, and tells us expressly, that *except we repent, we shall all perish*, Luke xiii. 3.

He promises them the *Assistance of his Spirit, to enable them that they may do his Will, and become obedient.* For this also is reckoned as another Article of *the Covenant made with* Abraham, *that he would grant unto us the Power to serve him in Holiness and Righteousness all the Days of our Lives*, Luke i. 72, 73, 74, 75; and the great Promise of the Gospel is, that *God will give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him*, Luke xi. 13. But then he expects, and accordingly they promise, that they will use and improve his Grace, whensoever it is intrusted with them, and endeavour after all Virtues as they stand in need of them, *God works in us both to will and to do*, says St. *Paul*, when we join with him, and *work out our own Salvation*, Phil. ii. 12, 13; and 'tis only *to him that hath*, saith our Saviour, *i. e.* to him which hath improved the *Talents* which were bestowed upon him, as those *good Servants* had done, who had gain'd the one * *five*, the other † *two* Talents with them, that *more shall be given, and he shall have abundance*; *but from him that hath not, i. e.* hath not improved what he had received, as the *wicked Servant* had not done, who *went* and ‖ *hid it, shall be taken away even that which he hath*, Matth. xxv. 29. And that this is God's ordinary Rule where he intrusts any Thing, he expressly declares again upon another Occasion, *Luke* xix. 26.

He promises them, lastly, *eternal Life and Happiness. This*, says St. *John*, *is the Promise which he hath promised us, even eternal Life*, 1 John ii. 25. But then he expects, and at the same Time we

* *v.* 20. † *v.* 22. ‖ *v.* 25.

promise,

promiſe, that we will obey all his Laws, and do every Thing which he requires of us. For *Chriſt is become the Author of eternal Salvation*, ſays the Apoſtle, *to thoſe* only *that obey him*, Heb. v. 9; and *bleſſed are they that do his Commandments*, ſays St. *John*, *for they* only *have Right to the Tree of Life*, Rev. xxii. 14.

So that the *New Covenant*, is a *mutual Contract and Engagement between God and Man*, wherein he promiſes to *all*, *who truly believe*, and accordingly they accept it, that he will *forgive them all their Sins when they ſincerely repent of them*, and *help them to any Graces when they carefully concur with him*, *and endeavour after them*, and *give them eternal Life after they have intirely obeyed him.* He promiſes Pardon, inward Grace, and everlaſting Happineſs; but then they, having Faith or Belief already, without an actual Exerciſe whereof, they would not ſeek after this Covenant, nor, if they did, could be admitted to it, make Promiſes to him again of Repentance, virtuous Endeavours, and an entire Obedience, which muſt confer a Claim, and give them Right thereto.

This is the New Covenant, and this Chriſt's bloody Death has purchaſed and procured for us. God would not diſpenſe with the *firſt* Covenant, without a Ranſom which might remove all Hindrances, by ſecuring the Honour of his Holineſs, and utterly diſcouraging all future Offences, and ſatisfying all the Ends of Juſtice; and becauſe that could not otherwiſe be ſo well effected, as he thought fit it ſhould, Chriſt himſelf became an *expiatory Sacrifice*, and, by dying for it, obtained the *Second.* And for this Cauſe, it is called the New Covenant in his Blood, *i. e.* that Covenant which was confirmed and purchaſed by it. *This*, ſays

says he, *is the New Testament*, or rather, the *New* * *Covenant in my Blood*, 1 Cor. xi. 25.

Now this Covenant, which is the Purchase of Christ's Death, and which is the Sum and Substance of all that he has got for us, we all entred into at first when we were *baptized*. For *Baptism* is our *sealing of this Covenant*, and *stipulating* or engaging to make good these Terms to Almighty God; *Baptism*, says St. † *Peter*, is *the Answer*, or ‖ *Stipulation of a good Conscience towards God*; *i. e.* it is the *fœderal Promise*, or *undertaking* thereof, which every Person makes when he is baptized. And this is plain, from that *Form* of the *baptismal Vow*, which the *primitive* Christians used, and which *we* use now at present, wherein, if they are *grown* Persons, they *themselves*, or if *Children*, their *God-fathers* and *God-mothers*, in their Names, do expresly covenant and engage for that *Faith*, *Repentance* or *Renouncing* of all Sins, and *Obedience* to God's Laws, which are required by it.

And as we *first entered* into this *Covenant*, when we were *baptized*; so are we called to *renew* and *confirm* the same, every Time we are invited to *sup* with our Blessed Lord, in this Holy *Sacrament*. When he summons us to eat Bread, and drink Wine in Remembrance of his Death at this Feast; he calls us withal to confirm the New Covenant, which his Death has procured, and which was the Price and Purchase of it. He invites us to receive Engagements from God of his promised Mercies, and to give him Engagements of our Duty and Service; to be assured by him, that, if we do *believe* the Holy Scriptures, he will *forgive* us all our Sins upon our *Repentance*, and give his *Grace* and

* Καινὴ διαθήκη. † 1 *Pet.* iii. 21. ‖ Ἐπερώτημα.

Spirit

Spirit to our *Endeavours*, and make us *eternally Happy* upon our *Obedience*; and to assure him, that we do so *believe*, and are resolv'd so to *repent*, *endeavour*, and *obey*, that so by Virtue of his gracious Promise, we may have Right thereto. He intends our eating and drinking at his Table, as a *fœderal Rite*, and for a Renewal and Ratification of this League of Love and Friendship: So that at the same Time, when we eat and drink in Remembrance of Christ's Death which procured the Covenant, we must solemnly give our own Consent to it, and expressly ratify and confirm it too.

This may fairly be presumed to be one End of the Holy Communion, because it is the End of *Baptism*, which St. *Peter* calls a * *Stipulation*, and which, as we have seen, is our Entrance into the *Gospel-Covenant* and *Religion*. And since it is so evidently the Use of that, in great likelihood it is of this too; for both the Sacraments were still held of like *Use*, *Nature*, and *Signification*.

Nay, this was the End, not only of the *Christian*, but also of the *Jewish Sacraments*, which shews that it was not peculiar to any one, but runs through all Sacraments.

For as for *Circumcision*, it was a fœderal Rite or Sign. It bound the *Jews* (as before it had done the *Patriarchs*) to God, and God to them, in the *Covenant* which *Moses* gave them, by a mutual Obligation. For therein they promised to perform, all that the *Law enjoined*—— *He that is circumcised*, says St. *Paul*, *is a Debtor to keep the whole Law*, Gal. v. 3. And thereby they were assured of the *Righteousness* and *Benefits* which *God* had *promised*— Abraham *received Circumcision*, *as a Seal of the Righteousness of Faith*, says the same Apostle, *i. e.* as a

* 1 *Pet.* iii. 22.

Seal

Seal or Confirmation of the Promises which were made to it, *Rom.* iv. 11. And because it was thus a Sign to both Parties, and a Rite used at their engaging in it, *Circumcision* is call'd *the Covenant*, *i. e.* the solemn Ceremony and undertaking thereof, *Gen.* xvii. 10. *Acts* vii. 8.

And then as for the *Passover*, it was also a *covenanting Ceremony* and *fœderal Rite*, as may sufficiently appear from its being a *Feast or Sacrifice*, which is the most solemn Way of *Covenanting* with God. And this Use of the *Passover*, is of the greater Weight to conclude the same of the *Lord's Supper*, because among us this answers to it, and comes instead thereof. It answers to it, I say; for our *bleeding Lord* was the great Thing, which their *sacrificed Lamb* was set to signify, whence he is called *the* * *Lamb without Blemish and without Spot*, *the* † *Lamb slain from the Foundation of the World*, and *the* ‖ *Lamb of God that takes away the Sins of Mankind*; and our *Feasting* upon his *Body* and *Blood*, is the same with their *Feasting upon the Body of the Paschal Lamb*, as St. *Paul* plainly intimates, when he says *Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us*, *therefore let us keep* our Eucharistical *Feast* upon him in our Passover, answerable to what they did upon the Lamb in theirs, 1 *Cor.* v. 7, 8. And at the Institution of the Holy Sacrament, our Saviour intimated that the Passover was abolish'd, and that this was henceforward to succeed and come instead of it. For immediately before he appointed his *own Supper*, he tells them that *he would not any more eat of the Lamb*, or *drink of the Wine* in the Passover; *i. e.* he would abolish this, so as we should no more eat or drink of it; and substitute that it its Place, *Luke* xxii. 16, 18.

* 1 *Pet.* i. 19. † *Rev.* xiii. 8. ‖ *Joh.* i. 29.

And

And now, since 'tis *the general Nature of Sacraments*, both among *Jews* and *Christians*, to be *covenanting Rites*; since *Baptism plainly is, which goes hand in hand with it*; and since the *Passover was, which preceded and answered to it*, this being substituted in Place, and put instead thereof: In all likelihood, the *Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is a fœderal Feast*, and a *covenanting Rite* too.

But to prove this yet more particularly. That this *Holy Sacrament is intended for a fœderal Rite*, and for our *Renewal* and *Ratification of the New Covenant*, will appear,

1*st*, From the *Words of Institution*, wherein the *Cup* is call'd the *New Covenant*, and we are bid to *drink* of it, which is a *fœderal Rite*.

In the Words of Institution, the *Cup*, is call'd the *New Covenant: This Cup*, says our Saviour, *is the New Testament*, or * *Covenant in my Blood*, 1 Cor. xi. 25.

And we are all bid to *drink* thereof, which is a *fœderal Rite*, and was then a known Ceremony of confirming any Covenant. *Drink ye all of it*, says he to his Disciples, *Matth.* xxvi. 27.

This drinking of it, as it is an Application of it to ourselves, and taking it into our own Bodies, is a plain Sign of our engaging in the same; for thereby we shew, that we close with it, and embrace it. But this is still further evident, because anciently among the *Jews*, and other *Eastern Nations*, *eating* and *drinking* were *fœderal Rites*, whereby they were wont mutually to seal *Leagues of Friendship*, and *confirm Covenants* with each other. For they used to bind their Compacts by a *friendly Treat*, and to consummate them in an *hospitable Entertainment*. Thus we read in the Story of

* Διαθήκη.

Laban and *Jacob*; for when *Laban* demands, *Come thou, let us make a Covenant, I and thou*, Gen. xxxi. 44. *Jacob*'s Consent to it is expressed by this,—— *he said unto his Brethren, gather Stones; and they took Stones, and made an Heap, and did eat there upon the Heap*; by that Note of Friendship answering the Demand, and confirming the Covenant which was proposed, *v.* 46. And so *Joshua*'s *covenanting*, or *making Peace* with the *Gibeonites* when they came to sue for it, is called his *taking of their Victuals*, Josh. ix.——the Men took of their Victuals, *and asked not Counsel of the Lord, and* Joshua *made Peace with them, and made a League with them to let them live*, Josh. ix. 14, 15. And *Obadiah* mentions *being in Covenant* with any one, and *eating Bread* with him, as Words which signify the same Thing, and one whereof is an Explication of the other. *The Men of thy Confederacy have brought thee even to the Border*, says he, *i. e.* have almost quite *bereft thee* of thy own Country; *the Men that are at Peace with thee, have deceived thee*; *they that eat thy Bread, have laid a Wound under thee*; in which Description of the *Enemies* of *Edom*, tho' there be Variety in the Expressions, yet it is one and the same Thing which is meant by them, *Obad.* v. 7. And the same might appear from other Instances, both in the *Holy Scriptures*, and in *Prophane Authors*.

Since in the Words of Institution then our Saviour tells his Disciples, that the *Cup* is the *New Covenant*, and bids them drink of it, which was well known among *them* to be a *fœderal Right*; he plainly shew'd his Meaning to be, that they should ratify and confirm *the New Covenant* thereby.

2*dly*, This appears from its being a *Feast upon Sacrifice*, which is a *fœderal Feast*; for *Sacrifice* is one Way of Covenant with God; and by Feasting on

on the Sacrifice, we join therein, and partake of it.

The *Lord's Supper*, I ſay, is a Feaſt upon *Sacrifice*. It was the Way both among *Jews* and *Gentiles*, when they *brought* an Offering to God, that they who offered it, ſhould come and feaſt on ſome Part of their Offering. Thus it was in the *Worſhip* of the *Golden Calf*, and the *Sacrifice* which *Aaron* made to it, *Exod.* xxxii. *He built an Altar before it, and offered Burnt-Offerings and Peace-Offerings, and the People ſat down to eat and to drink, i. e.* upon Part of what they had offered, *v.* 5, 6. And thus it was in the *Sacrifice* which *Samuel* bleſſed, 1 Sam. ix. *The People will not eat until he come, becauſe he doth bleſs the Sacrifice, and afterwards they eat that be bidden*, v. 13. And to this Uſage ſeveral Places of the Scripture allude, as namely *Pſal.* cvi. 28.——*They joined themſelves unto* Baal-Peor, *and eat the Sacrifices of the Dead.* And *Exod.* xxxiv. 15.—*Leſt thou do Sacrifice unto their Gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his Sacrifice*; and ſeveral others. And as it was thus in the religious Feaſts both of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, ſo is it alſo in the *Lord's Supper*. Our Saviour gave his *Body* and *Blood* as a *Sacrifice* for our Sins, *Putting away Sin*, as the Apoſtle ſays, *by the Sacrifice of himſelf*, Heb. ix. 26. And having thus made the Oblation, according to what was in Uſe both in the *Jewiſh* and *Gentile* Sacrifices, he inſtitutes this Treat of Bread and Wine, as a Feaſt upon it. This I ſuppoſe is aim'd at, when St. *Paul* brings in an Altar, ſpeaking of the *Chriſtian Feaſt*, which ſufficiently intimates its Relation to a *Sacrifice*, as a Treat upon it: *We have an Altar*, ſays he, *whereof they have no Right to eat that ſerve the Tabernacle, i. e.* wherein the ſtrict *Judaizers* may not partake; for *Judaiſm* excludes Men from the Communion eſpecially,

and indeed from all Parts of Christian Worship, *Heb.* xiii. 10. And this he also shews concerning the same, when he compares it with the *Jewish* and *Gentile Feasts on Sacrifices*, making them answerable and parallel thereto, 1 *Cor.* x. 16, 18, 20, 21. And this he directly affirms of it, when he says *Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the* Eucharistical Feast, *i. e.* upon this sacrificed Christ, 1 Cor. v. 7, 8.

And *Feasts upon Sacrifice* are fœderal Feasts, *i. e.* Feasts which ratify and confirm Covenants; for *Sacrifice* is one Way of covenanting with God, and Feasting upon the Sacrifice is the Way of participating or sharing in it.

Sacrifice, I say, is one Way of covenanting with God. When God would enter into Articles, and bind himself in Covenant with Men, he chose to do it in shedding the Blood of some Sacrifice that typified the Blood of Christ his Son, which is the only Thing that moves him to deal with us in any Concern that either implies or tends to Friendship and Reconciliation. Thus he did with *Abraham*, when he promised him the Land of *Canaan*, if he would continue * *perfect*, and walk before him; he ordered him to make a *Sacrifice*, that therein he might covenant and engage it to him. *Take an Heifer*, says he, *and a She-Goat, and a Ram*, &c. *And* Abraham *took them, and divided them in the midst, and when the Sun went down, behold a smoaking Furnace, and a burning Lamp that passed between those Pieces*, wherein, it is like, God consumed and feasted on *Abraham*'s Sacrifice; *and in that same Day the Lord made a Covenant with* Abraham, *saying, Unto thy Seed have I given this Land*, &c. Gen. xv. 8, 9, 10, 17, 18. And thus he did with

* *Gen.* xvii. 1, 2.

the

the *Jewish Nation*, when he ratified the *Mosaic* Covenant with them; chusing the *Blood* of *Burnt-Offerings*, that therein he might seal it to them. For when *Moses told the People all the Words of the Lord, and they answered with one Voice, saying, We will do them; he built an Altar of twelve Pillars, according to the twelve Tribes, and offered Burnt-Offerings and Peace-Offerings, and* then recited *the Book of the Covenant in their Ears*, that they might give their Assent to it in the Solemnity of this Sacrifice; the Blood whereof is therefore called *the Blood of the Covenant*, because the Covenant was thus solemnly entred, and established thereby, *Exod.* xxiv. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. And thus he did in other Compacts, but particularly in *all those* wherein he promised *Pardon of Sin*; *for without shedding of Blood, i. e.* of some Sacrifice, says the Apostle, there *is no Remission*, Heb. ix. 22. Thus did God, in *all Contracts of Pardon* and *Reconciliation*, require the *Blood* of some *Sacrifice*, that therein he might ratify and confirm the same. And this was the great Use, whereto *all Sacrifices of Expiation*, (such as our *Saviour Christ's* is in most signal Manner, whereon we *Feast* in the *Lord's Supper)* served among the *Jews*; they were *solemn Compacts* and *Stipulations*, wherein *he promised Pardon*, and they *Amendment*, after any Offences. He engaged to *accept the Life of the sacrificed Beast in lieu of theirs*, and to exempt them, because it had suffered; and they engaged to *amend the Fault which they sought thereby to have atoned*, and never more to repeat it. This it is plain they did, from that *Form of penitential Confession* in use among them, when they brought an *expiatory Sacrifice* to the Lord: * *O Lord! I have sinned, and dealt wickedly,*

* Obsecro Domine, peccavi, deliqui, rebellavi, hoc aut illud feci, nunc autem pœnitentiam ago, sitque hæc hostia expiatio mea. *Vi. Episcop. Instit. l.* 3. *c.* 3. *ad Prep.* 35. *& Outr. de Sacr. c.* 15.

and rebelled against thee in doing this or that; now I am sorry for it, and ashamed of it, and will never return to it any more; and therefore beg that this Sacrifice may atone for it. And if they had not thus repented of it, the * Sacrifice would have been of no avail to the Forgiveness thereof. For, *to what Purpose is the Multitude of your Sacrifices unto me, saith the Lord*, so long as you shew no Repentance with them? But *wash you, make you clean, cease to do evil, learn to do well: Come now, and let us reason together; tho' your Sins be as Scarlet, they shall be as white as Snow*, Isa. i. 11, 16, 17, 18. *The Sacrifices of God*, says the Psalmist, *are a broken Spirit, i. e.* they must be offered and presented with it; *a broken and a contrite Heart, O God, thou wilt not despise*, Ps. li. 17.

Thus were *Sacrifices* a *mutual Stipulation* and *Engagement*, consisting of a *Promise of Pardon on God's Part*, and of a *Promise of Repentance and Amendment on Man's*; so that they were in the Nature of a *virtual Contract* and *Covenant*, between them. And this God plainly intimates concerning them, when he tells of his *Saints* making a *Covenant with him by Sacrifice.*—— *Gather my Saints*, saith he, *who have made a Covenant with me by Sacrifice*, Ps. l. 5. and calls *Salt, wherewith every Oblation of Meat-Offering was to be seasoned, the Salt of the Covenant*; because it was to season all those Sacrifices wherein the Covenant was confirmed, *Levit.* ii. 13.

And as *Sacrifice* is *one Way of Covenanting with God*, so is *Feasting upon the Sacrifice, the Way of sharing and partaking in it.* He who joined in the Feast, was looked upon by God himself to join also in the Offering, to *promise* all the *Duty* which it engaged, and to *partake* in all the *Blessings* which it

* *Isaiah* lxvi. 3.

procured

procured for them. *They which eat of the Sacrifice*, ſays St. *Paul*, *are Partakers of the Altar*, 1 Cor. x. 18. And therefore he forbids them to join in the *Gentile Feaſts*, where they *ſacrificed to Devils*, becauſe that were *to partake* and *have Fellowſhip with Devils*, v. 20, 21.

And thus, from this alſo, *viz.* the *Lord's Supper being a Feaſt on Sacrifice*, it appears to be a *fœderal Rite*, becauſe *Sacrifice is the great Way of Covenanting with God*, and by *Feaſting on the Sacrifice*, *we join in the ſame*, *and partake of it*. In *eating Bread* and *drinking Wine* at the *Lord's Table*, agreeable to what the *Jews* and *Gentiles* did at their *religious Feaſts*, we feed on the *Sacrifice* of *Chriſt*; and that Sacrifice confirmed the *New Covenant* with Almighty God, that being as he ſays, ſealed * *in his Blood*, ſo that by our Feaſting on it we are made to ſhare therein, and give our full Conſent thereto.

3*dly*, That our Eating and Drinking at the Lord's Table is a Covenant-Rite, appears from *all the particular Bleſſings of the Covenant being conveyed by it*, which are not to be had otherwiſe than by *fœderal Promiſes* and *Performances*.

The particular Bleſſings promiſed in the Covenant, I ſay, are all *conveyed* by it. Our Saviour tells us of the *Bread* which we eat, and of the *Wine* which we drink, that they are his *Body* and *Blood*:——*This is my Body*, ſays he, and *this is my Blood of the New Teſtament*, Matth. xxvi. 26, 28. By which, altho' we are not to underſtand that they are ſo in their *Natures*, yet the leaſt we can underſtand is, that they are ſo in their *Effects*, *i. e.* that they convey to us all thoſe Bleſſings, which the Piercing of his Body, and the Shedding of his Blood, procured for us. Thoſe Bleſſings are con-

* 1 *Cor.* xi. 25.

tained in the New Covenant; and, as I said, are chiefly these *three*, *viz.* the *Forgiveness of our Sins*, the *Assistance of God's Holy Spirit*, to aid and strengthen us, and *eternal Life* and *Happiness*; and all these the eating of Bread and drinking Wine in the Holy Sacrament, are designed to convey to us.

They convey to us the *Forgiveness of our Sins*, and assure us, when we perform them as we ought, that God is in Favour and at Peace with us. Of this we have sufficient Assurance, because we *Feast upon a Sacrifice*, which is God's Meat, and are entertained at his own Table, as *his Guests* whom he has invited; and the least which that can mean is, that he admits us into a State of Love and Friendliness, since we do not invite those whom we will not be Friends withal to our own Tables. When any one calls another to a friendly Treat, it is a plain Sign, that he either *would be*, or *is*, or at least *makes a shew of being* reconciled. It is a most natural Sign, and *now* every where *is*, and *always was* a Note of Friendship and Endearment; and as such the Scriptures are wont to speak of it. When those whom he *had shut out*, should *knock at the Door* to be let in, and claim Acquaintance; our Saviour tells us, that they will say to him, *We have eaten and drunk in thy Presence*, Luke xiii. 25, 26. And when he shews his *Apostles* how high Favour, and what great Interest they shall have with him, he tells them, that they shall *eat and drink at his Table in his Kingdom*, Luke xxii. 29, 30. And when he declares how kind he will be to those *that hear his Voice, and open unto him*, he says, he *will come in and sup with them, and they with him*, Rev. iii. 20. So that when God entertains us at his own Table, and invites us to feast with him, as he doth in the *Holy Communion*; we may be sure, if we come

come worthily, as we ought, that he is in Friendſhip with us, and ready to forgive us all our Sins. And this our Saviour plainly intimates, when he tells us at the giving of the bleſſed *Cup*, that it is * *his Blood ſhed for the Remiſſion of Sins*; and when he bids us † *drink of it*, that ſo we may have it in ourſelves, and be aſſured that we have received the Atonement. And this we muſt obſerve, is a Privilege, which God never vouchſafed to the *Jews*, no not to the *Prieſts* themſelves; for in all their *Sacrifices*, he would never give them the *Blood of Expiation*, to aſſure them of their Sins being atoned by it, (nay, nor the *Fleſh* neither in the *great Sacrifice of Expiation*, which *was burnt* ‖ *without the Camp*) but ordered it always to be poured out *upon the Altar*, or *the Ground*, Exod. xxix. 12. Lev. iv. 25, 30, 34. And to this, it is like St. *Paul* may have Reſpect, when he tells the *Hebrews*, *that we have an Altar, whereof they have no Right to eat, who ſerve the Tabernacle*, Heb. xiii. 10, 11.

They convey to us alſo the *Aſſiſtance of God's Holy Spirit and Grace, to aid and ſtrengthen us.* This is intimated by our Saviour Chriſt, when he calls his Fleſh, which all muſt eat (*i. e.* not in its *natural Subſtance*, but in its *Effects*, or thoſe Bleſſings which were purchaſed by it) by the Name of *Bread*, which is a Thing *that*, as the ‡ *Pſalmiſt* ſays, *ſtrengthens Man's Heart*, and gives Nouriſhment and Support to us. *I am the living Bread*, ſays he, *which came down from Heaven: If any Man eat of this Bread, he ſhall live for ever; and the Bread which I will give, is my Fleſh, which I will give for the Life of the World*, Joh. vi. 51. In the Sacrament, we are called to *eat Chriſt's Fleſh*, and to *drink his Blood*,

* Matth. xxvi. 28. † Verſe 27. ‖ Lev. xvi. 27. Heb. xiii. 11. ‡ Pſal. civ. 15.

(not

(not in their natural Substances, as I have hinted, but in their Effects :) and *he that eateth my Flesh, and drinketh my Blood*, saith he, *dwelleth in me, and I in him* ; and when Christ dwells in any Man, his Spirit dwells there too, so that he cannot want Grace sufficient to assist him, *Joh.* vi. 56. And St. *Paul*, alluding to the Power of Wine, whose natural Virtue is to inspirit and enliven Men, says, That in the Eucharist *we are all made to drink into one Spirit, i. e.* we are all made to share in the same holy Spirit, which is the same to our Souls that a Draught of Wine is to our Bodies, a Principle of new Life, Strength, and Vigour in us, 1 *Cor.* xii. 13.

They convey to us, lastly, a *Right* and *Title to eternal Life and Happiness*. The blessed Sacrament was thought *anciently* to have a peculiar Efficacy in preparing our Bodies for an immortal State. Thus *Irenæus* says of it: * *As the Bread that springs from the Earth, after it is blessed is not common Bread, but the Eucharist, consisting of an earthly and an heavenly Part, i. e.* the sensible Sign, and the spiritual Thing signified ; *so our Bodies receiving the Communion, are not now corruptible as they were before, but are put in Hopes of a Resurrection.* And St. *Ignatius* calls it † *the Medicine of Immortality, which is an Antidote to preserve Men from Dying, and give them a Life that is everlasting.* And to this, as it is not unlike, the Prayer at the giving of the Bread

* Quemadmodum enim qui est a terra panis percipiens invocationem Dei, jam non Communis panis est, sed Eucharistia, ex duabus rebus constans, terrena & cœlesti: sic & corpora nostra percipientia Eucharistiam, jam non sunt corruptibilia, spem resurrectionis habentia. *Iren. l.* 4. *adv. Hær. c.* 34.

† Ἕνα ἄρτον κλῶντες, ὅς ἐστι φάρμακον ἀθανασίας, ἀντίδοτος τοῦ μὴ ἀποθανεῖν, ἀλλὰ ζῆν ἐν Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ διὰ παντός. *Ignat. Ep. ad Ephes.*

and

and Wine refers, that they may *preſerve our Souls and Bodies to everlaſting Life*, as it was *long ſince* in the Form of the *Weſtern Church*, and as it is *ſtill* in Uſe amongſt *us*. But whatever becomes of that Conceit, *viz. its preparing our Bodies for it*; it is plain that a *Right to Life* and *Immortality* is thereby conferred on us. *Whoſo eateth my Fleſh, and drinketh my Blood*, ſaith our Saviour, *hath eternal Life, and I will raiſe him up at the laſt Day*, Joh. vi. 54. and again, *He that eateth of this Bread ſhall live for ever*, v. 58. And if he had not in expreſs Words declared it, in all Equity and Reaſon this might moſt juſtly have been preſumed: For ſince in this Holy Sacrament God gives us the Body and Blood of his own Son, than which nothing can be dearer to him; we may juſtly argue as St. *Paul* doth, and ſay, *He that ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up*, both *for*, and to *us all*, *how ſhall he not with him alſo freely give us all Things?* Rom. viii. 32.

Thus are all the *particular Bleſſings* of the *New Covenant*, which Chriſt's Blood has purchaſed, and which God has promiſed and made over to us therein, conveyed to us in this Holy Sacrament. And ſince they are ſo, it muſt needs be a *fœderal Rite*, and a *ſolemn Ceremony* of our *covenanting* with God; becauſe theſe Bleſſings are not to be had otherwiſe, than by *fœderal Performances* and *Engagements*. God has ſuſpended all theſe Benefits upon our Performance of certain Conditions; ſo that we cannot have them conveyed to us on his Part, otherwiſe than by undertaking at the ſame Time, for theſe on our own. He will not forgive any Believers their *Sins*, unleſs they repent of them; nor help them to any *Graces*, unleſs they *endeavour* after them; nor reward them at laſt with *eternal Life*, unleſs they have *entirely obeyed* him, as we have already ſeen. And therefore whereſoever *thoſe* are beſtowed,

theſe

these are either actually performed, or sincerely promised that they shall be performed too.

So that from this Reason also, it appears, that the *Sacrament* is a *fœderal Rite*, and a Ratification of the *New Covenant*, and of our *baptismal Engagements*; because all the Blessings of that Covenant are conveyed thereby, which are not to be had otherwise, than by *fœderal* Performances or Engagements.

And thus we see, upon all these Accounts, that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper is intended not only for a *Remembrance of the Death of Christ*, but also for a *Renewal* and *Ratification of the New Covenant* which was purchased by it. For so much the *general Nature of Sacraments*, *which are Covenant Rites of Baptism*, *which goes Hand in Hand with it*, and of *the Passover which preceded and answered to it*, do fairly intimate; and so much also the *Words of Institution do declare*, and its being a *Feast on Sacrifice infers*, and its *conveying all the Blessings of the Covenant doth prove concerning it.*

And this is the *Second* End of our eating Bread, and drinking Wine in the Holy Sacrament; namely, to *renew our baptismal Vow*, and in most solemn Sort to *confirm the New Covenant* with Almighty God. So that when we come to remember our Saviour Christ in this Feast, we must come also to give and receive Engagements with our blessed Lord, promising that we will believe all his Words, and endeavour after all Virtues, and obey all his holy Laws, and repent of all our Sins; and then hoping assuredly, that his Mercy shall forgive us, that his Grace and Spirit shall assist us, and that his Bounty shall reward us with eternal Happiness, when we do.

But

But beſides theſe Ends of its being in *Remembrance of Chriſt*, and of his dying for us, and in *Confirmation of the New Covenant* which was purchaſed by his Death; there is yet another,

3*dly*, And that is, in *Ratification of a League of Love and Friendſhip with thoſe Brethren who Communicate with us, and with all others.*

Eating and drinking together at the ſame Table, and joining in the ſame Feaſt, was always a Note of Friendſhip, and a Profeſſion of Love and Kindneſs among Men. It is the common Way of the World, to *compoſe Differences*, to *keep up Friendlineſs in Neighbourhoods*, and to *beget Endearment* and *mutual Love in all Fraternities.* And the ſame our Saviour intended it ſhould be amongſt us. He invites us all to eat of the ſame Loaf, and to feaſt at the ſame Table, that we may mutually embrace as Friends, and love as Brethren, and be knit together in the ſame Fellowſhip and Communion. *We being many*, ſays St. *Paul*, *are one Bread and one Body, for* in the Sacrament *we are all Partakers of that one Bread*, whch is a firm Bond of Union to make us one alſo, 1 *Cor.* x. 17. It links us together by the moſt *powerful Arguments*, of our being *Servants of the ſame Lord*, and *Sharers in the ſame Privileges*, and *Members of the ſame Body*, which are all moſt *ſtrong Motives* to Peace and mutual Kindneſs; and beſides all this, by our own *ſolemn Covenant* and *Engagement* alſo. For in coming to this Feaſt, we are not only *excited* to it by mighty Reaſons which ſuggeſt it; but are to *Covenant* and Promiſe Love to all our Brethren, and to plight our Troth for the ſame. And thus the *primitive Chriſtians* underſtood it, and accordingly made uſe thereof; whoſe *Judgment* and *Practice* in this Point were ſo apparent, that the *Heathens* themſelves, who looked any thing into their Religion, took Notice of it. For *Pliny*,

Pliny, in his Letter to the Emperor *Trajan*, wherein he gives an Account of the *Christians Meetings*, reports their *Communicating* in the Eucharist, to be a *religious Compact* and *Combination* among themselves, that they will do no hurt to each other, but will love as Brethren, and live as Friends together. * *They assemble early in the Morning*, says he, *and sing an Hymn to Christ as God*; *and then bind themselves mutually in* their Sacrament, which is *a sacred Oath*, *not to join in committing any Wickedness* like a Pack of lewd Conspirators; *but religiously to keep off from the same*, *and to be no Thieves*, *Adulterers*, *nor injurious*, *nor false and perfidious Persons*: *And having done these Things*, *and given these Assurances of mutual Honesty and Kindnesses to each other*, *they depart home*, *and meet again at a promiscuous and friendly Treat*, *where they innocently feast together*.

This then is a *third* End of our eating Bread and drinking Wine in the Holy Sacrament, namely, to be a *solemn Profession of our Communion* and *Fellowship with our Brethren*, and an Engagement of mutual Love and Friendship to those who communicate with us, and to all others. So that when we come therein to remember our Saviour Christ, and to confirm the New Covenant with Almighty God, we must enter into a League of Love with all our Brethren, and promise an inviolable Friendship unto them too.

* Soliti stato die ante lucem convenire; carmenque Christo, quasi Deo dicere secum invicem: Seque Sacramento non in scelus aliquod obstringere, sed ne furta, ne latrocinia, ne adulteria committerent, ne fidem fallerent, ne depositum appellati abnegarent; quibus peractis morem sibi discedendi fuisse, rursusque coeundi ad capescendum cibum, promiscuum tamen & innoxium. *Plin. ep. l.* 10. *ep.* 97.

And

And thus we see what is the Meaning of eating Bread and drinking Wine in the Holy Communion, and what we must intend and understand by them, that we may, as the Apostle says, * *discern the Lord's Body therein.* When we eat Bread and drink Wine according to Christ's Appointment, we must fix our Thoughts upon him, and *remember what Love and Friendship he bore to us*; what *Lessons, as our faithful Guide and Instructor, he has taught us*; what *Commands, as our Lord and Master, he has left with us*; and what *inexpressible Things, as our most precious Saviour and Benefactor, he has done for us*, in being *made Man*, and leading a *mean* and *necessitous Life*, but above all, in *dying a most ignominious* and *painful Death* for our Sakes, and that he might purchase for us the *Favour of God*, the *Graces of the Holy Spirit*, and *Eternal Happiness*. We must *renew that Engagement which we made with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, when we were baptized*, and confirm again that *New Covenant* with Almighty God, which was procured by his precious Blood; professing that we *do*, and *will believe his Word*, and *repent of all our Transgressions*, and *endeavour with his Spirit*, and *obey all*, not *willfully* transgressing *any* of his holy Commandments; that so we may have Right to that *Forgiveness*, *Grace*, and *Happiness*, which upon these Terms he has purchased for us. And lastly, We must confirm *a League of Love and Friendship among all our Brethren*, professing that we *do* and *will* forgive all who have injured us, and be kind to all about us, and never fall into Hatred, or cause Difference with any Persons, but be at Peace, and live in Charity with all the World. The bodily Eating is but the Out-side, and the least Part in this Feast; but the

* 1 Cor. xi, 22.

chief

chief Thing required, is this spiritual Work and Business, which is to accompany it. So that when our Saviour Christ calls us to eat and drink at his own Table, he calls us not barely to feast our Bodies, for that is the least Thing that he intends; but chiefly and principally to employ our Souls, in remembring him, his Laws and Benefits, and among *them*, above all others, that of his dying for us; in confirming the New Covenant with God, and a Covenant of Peace and brotherly Love with his Members throughout all Mankind.

CHAP. II.

Of the Worthiness of Communicating in the Holy Sacrament.

The CONTENTS.

To Communicate Worthily, is to do it with such Tempers and Behaviour as are worthy of it, and becoming the Things which are meant thereby. The First *End was to remember Christ, both,* 1. *As our Lord and Master, which calls for Honour and Reverence in ourselves, and a Care to maintain his Honour among others. For Mindfulness of his Commands, and Resolutions of Obedience.* 2. *As our most kind Friend and Benefactor, which calls for Love, and an hearty Affection for him. For Joy and Gladness in what we receive from him. For Thankfulness for all his Kindnesses, particularly in Dying for us. And as this Death was a Sacrifice for our Sins, the Remembrance of it calls for a deep Sense of our own Unworthiness.*

An

An utter Abhorrence of our own Sins, which caused his Sufferings. A Resignation of ourselves to his Use, as thereby we are become his own Purchase. The Second *End, was to confirm the New Covenant with God, which was purchased by his Blood. This calls for Sincerity and Faithfulness. A* Third *End was to confirm a League of Love and Friendship with all Christians. This calls for Peace and Charity to all Persons, and particularly for Alms to the Necessitous. A summary Repetition of these Qualifications. A Belief of these Things, which carries us on to these Tempers and Performances, is the Faith that makes us worthy Communicants.*

HAVING shewn hitherto what is the Meaning of eating Bread and drinking Wine in the blessed Sacrament; I proceed now, in the next Place, to shew *wherein the Worthiness of doing this lies.* And this had need be clearly stated, not only because the most considerable Scruple against Communicating lies therein, but also because really it is a Matter of great Account, and there hangs a great Weight upon it. *For he that eats and drinks Unworthily*, says the Apostle, commits a damning Sin, which will destroy him, unless he repent of the same; *he eats and drinks Damnation to himself*, 1 Cor. xi. 29. and *is guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord*, *ver.* 27.

Now to *Do this Worthily*, is to *Do it with such Tempers and Dispositions, as become it*, and *are worthy of it.* For this eating and drinking not being to satisfy Hunger, but for sacred Ends; it is fit we should come to it with a suitable and sacred Carriage, and in that consists the Worthiness of the Usage. Were it only a Feast on *common Food*, we should behave ourselves worthily thereat, by *thank-*

ing God for the ſame, and being *temperate*. But being a Feaſt, wherein *Religion* is concern'd, and whereat we are to *remember the Death of our deareſt Lord*, and to *ſeal the New Covenant with Almighty God*, and a *League of Love with all the Chriſtian World*; to the doing this worthily, and as it is fit we ſhould, there is more required. For we deal very unworthily in *remembring the Death of our deareſt Lord*, if we are not *thankful for* it; and in *ratifying the New Covenant* with God, if we are not *ſincere* therein; and *in promiſing Love* to all the *Chriſtian World*, if amidſt theſe Promiſes we ſtill bear *Enmity* and *Hatred* towards them. Theſe religious Ends, muſt be anſwered with a religious Temper, and a devout Carriage; and then they are treated as they ought to be, and as their Worth requires. This is ſignified by ſeveral Copies, which in 1 *Cor.* xi. 27. read not barely, *Whoſoever ſhall eat this Bread, and drink this Cup* * *OF THE LORD UNWORTHILY*; but *whoſoever ſhall eat this Bread, and drink this Cup of the Lord, UNWORTHILY OF THE LORD*, *i. e.* in a Way unworthy of him; which clearly ſhews that the Unworthineſs conſiſts in the Want of thoſe Tempers wherewith it is fit our bleſſed Lord ſhould be treated, when he is ſolemnly remembred and commemorated. And this the Apoſtle plainly intimates, when he places the *Unworthineſs of Eating*, in not *diſcerning*, or rather in not *diſcriminating the Lord's Body*, and putting a Difference between it and our common Food, by ſhewing a different Carriage

* *Not merely* πίνῃ τὸ ποτήριον τῦ κυρίυ ἀναξίως, *but* ἀναξίως τῦ κυρίυ, *as ſeveral MSS. partic.* Coll. Linc. Coll. Nov. *read the Place. And this is followed by St.* Ambroſe, *who reads thus* ——Biberit calicem Domini indigne Domino, *v.* 27. *and St.* Chryſoſtom, *who reads thus*——ἐσθίων καὶ πίνων ἀναξίως [τῦ κυρίυ] κρίμα ἑαυτῷ, *&c. v.* 29.

and

and Behaviour in our Receipt thereof. *He that eats and drinks unworthily*, says he, *eats and drinks Damnation to himself*, for such unworthy Usage, which lies in his *not discerning*, or rather *not* **discriminating the Lord's Body*, 1 Cor. xi. 29.

Thus doth a worthy eating of the Holy Sacrament, consist in answering its sacred Ends, with sacred and suitable Carriage and Dispositions. And therefore, that we may see what Behaviour is worthy of it, it is fit we run over those several Ends, and enquire what Tempers every one of them requires of us.

Those Ends are Three:

1*st*, To *remember Christ our blessed Lord and Saviour*, and particularly his *dying for us*; which call for *Love*, *Joy*, *Gratitude*, *obedient Resolutions*, and such like Tempers.

2*dly*, To *confirm the New Covenant* with Almighty God; which is not worthily done by us, unless we come to it in *Sincerity* and *Faithfulness*, and with full *Purpose* and *Performance* of that *Repentance* and *Obedience*, which we therein *profess* and make *Promise* of.

3*dly*, To *confirm a League of Love and Friendship, with all our Brethren and Fellow-Christians*; which requires that we lay aside all *Envy*, *Hatred*, and *malicious Thoughts*, and come to it in *Peace* and *Forgiveness* of all those, who have any Ways offended us.

If we *believe* all these Things which *Jesus Christ* our great *Prophet* has reveal'd to us, and our *Faith* shews itself in *these Tempers*, and carries us on to *these Performances*; we are *worthy Communicants*,

* μὴ διακρίνων.

and have that *Faith*, which will render us welcome Guests at the Lord's Table, and acceptable to him at all other Times.

1*ſt*, One End of our eating Bread and drinking Wine at the Lord's Supper, is to *remember Chriſt*, not only as our *Prophet* and *Teacher* (which I do not make a *diſtinct* Head now, becauſe the *Belief* required to that, is exerciſed thro' the whole Action, and falls in at all the other) but as our *bleſſed Lord*, *Saviour* and *Benefactor*; and above all his Benefits, particularly to remember *his dying for us*; and this, to do it worthily, calls for *Love*, *Joy*, *Gratitude*, *Reſolutions of Obedience*, and other ſuch like Tempers.

The Remembrance of any thing abſent, and long ſince paſt, brings it back into our Minds, and gives a Sort of *Preſence* to it. And therefore when Things are brought to our Remembrance, they ſhould work upon us, and affect us, as if they were before us. When we remember our Saviour Chriſt then, at this holy Feaſt, we muſt bear the ſame Mind towards him, as we ſhould do if we ſaw him, and were converſing with him; and that will conſiſt in theſe Things which follow. We muſt *honour him*, and *reſolve to obey him*, as he is our *Lord* and *Maſter*; and *love him*, and *delight in him*, and *give thanks to him*, as he is our *Friend* and *Benefactor*; and *be humbled under the Senſe of our own Unworthineſs*, and *abhor our own Sins*, *as they brought him to bleed and die for us*; and *reſign up ourſelves*, *both Souls and Bodies*, *to his Uſe*, *as we are bought with his Blood*, and are thereby become his own Purchaſe.

1*ſt*, In eating and drinking in the Lord's Supper, we are to *remember Jeſus Chriſt as our Lord and Maſter*; and to do that *Worthily*, we muſt remember him with *Honour* and *Reverence*, and with *Mindfulneſs*

Mindfulneſs of his Commands, and *Reſolutions of Obedience,* which are Duties that we all owe, and ſhould pay to him, were he preſent with us.

1*ſt*, We ought to *remember him our Lord and Maſter*, with *Honour* and *Reverence*.

Theſe Tempers *Lordſhip* and *Authority* always call for, whenſoever they are lodged in any Perſons. *A Son honoureth his Father*, ſaith God, *and a Servant his Maſter: If then I be a Father, where is mine Honour? And if I be a Maſter, where is my Fear?* Mal. i. 6. *Honour the King*, ſays St. *Peter*, and *Servants be ſubject to your Maſters with all Fear*, 1 Pet. ii. 17, 18. And *Render to all their Dues*, ſays St. *Paul*, as *Fear* or Reverence, *to whom Fear, Honour to whom Honour* is due, *Rom.* xiii. 7.

But when this Authority is in the *moſt abſolute* and *full Degrees*, and is *joined with the higheſt Excellencies*, and *tempered with the moſt Endearments*, and *guided by the moſt ſurpaſſing Goodneſs*, as it is in *Chriſt Jeſus*, it calls for them moſt eſpecially. For he is every Way wonderfully accompliſhed, and has all thoſe Endowments in their greateſt Perfection, which of right can challenge, or are fit to excite them: For he is *boundleſs in Knowledge*, he * *underſtands all Things*; and *infinitely* † *Wiſe in Counſel*, able to ſuit Means to every End, and to bring about every Purpoſe; and *ſurpaſſing in* ‖ *Might*, ſo that he may do what he pleaſes; and ‡ *holy in all his Ways*; and § *faithful in all his Promiſes*; and ⊥ *juſt* and *equitable in all his Dealings*; and *glorious in his divine Eſſence*, being the very ** *Brightneſs of his Father's Glory*, and *the expreſs Image of his Perſon*; and *ſupereminent in Power*, having

* Joh. xxi. 17. † Iſa. xi. 1, 2. ‖ Iſa. ix. 6. & Rev. iii. 7.
‡ 1 Joh. iii. 5. § Rev. iii. 7. ⊥ Iſa. ix. 7.
** Heb. i. 3.

all * *Authority in Heaven and Earth* put into his Hands. And yet in the midſt of all theſe *Excellencies*, and the Height of all this *Greatneſs*, which are apt to puff us up with *Pride* and *Contempt of others*, he is *unſpeakable in* † *Love*, and *wonderful in* ‡ *Condeſcenſions*, vouchſafing to leave Heaven, where he was *equal to God, and be made in Faſhion of a mean Man*, for our Sakes; and he is *unwearied in* § *doing Services*; and *moſt prodigiouſly free in Bounty and Kindneſs*, giving his own ‖ *Heart's Blood*, to purchaſe *Heaven and eternal Life* for us; for all which *Height of Excellencies*, and *Plenitude of Power*, and *Depth of Love*, he is moſt ✝ *profoundly reverenced*, and *dearly prized*, and *highly exalted* by *glorified Saints*, and the *pure* and *immortal Angels*. All theſe *adorable Excellencies*, are in their utmoſt Perfection in our Lord and Maſter, Chriſt Jeſus; and their *Merit* calls for all the *Honour* and *Reverence* which he can poſſibly receive from us. And this accordingly God has expreſly required of us. *He hath committed all Judgment to the Son, that all ſhould honour the Son, even as they honour the Father*, Joh. v. 22, 23. and *highly exalting him, hath given him a Name above every Name, that at the Name of Jeſus every Knee ſhall bow, of Things in Heaven, and of Things in Earth*, Phil. ii. 9, 10. He incomparably deſerves our utmoſt Worſhip and Reverence, and has a moſt abſolute Claim to them; ſo that we muſt needs treat him with the moſt ſubmiſſive and reſpectful Carriage, and ſhould deal moſt unworthily by him, and do what utterly misbecomes us, if we ſhould do otherwiſe.

* Mat. xxviii. 18. † 1 Joh. iii. 16. ‡ Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8.
§ Mar. x. 45. Acts x. 38. ‖ Joh. vi. 15. Rev. v. 9.
✝ Rev. v. 11, 12, 13.

Thus

Thus we must remember our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, with *Honour* and *Veneration*, if we would do it in such Sort as is *worthy* of him.

Nay, we must not only honour and reverence him *ourselves*, but, if we would deal worthily by him, seek to *make him honourable*, and promote his Honour among *others*. We must be ready always to plead his Cause, and to vindicate his Precepts, and to side with his Servants, and express a just Distaste against those who transgress his Commands themselves, (and much more against those who set up for the Party of Disobedience, and seek to draw in others,) who prophane his Ordinances, or lightly and irreverently use his Name, or any ways vilify any Person or Thing, which he ought to be glorified and honoured in. And this we shall be sure to do, if we have any high Esteem, and Zeal of Love, and affectionate Concern for him. For when these are strong in them, every *Servant* will perform this Office to his *Master*, and every *Man* to his *Friend*; they will not sit still, and tamely hear his Name abused, or see his Commands slighted, his Interests opposed, his Children or Dependents injured, his Appointments disparaged, or his Person any way traduced or disgraced, without expressing a discreet and well-tempered Zeal in his Cause, and concerning themselves in a sober and just Vindication. This, I say, they ordinarily will do, as I am sure they always ought to do, when they have an high Esteem for any Person. And if thro' Lowness of Spirit, or Cowardise of Temper, they draw back from the Trouble or Hazard which they are like to run in his Vindication; they are very much wanting to their Friend or Lord, and deal unworthily by him. So that if we would deal worthily by our Friend and Master Jesus Christ, we must neither dishonour

him ourſelves, nor, if we can help it, at leaſt not without expreſſing our Diſlike of it, ſuffer it to be done by others. And therefore to make this ſacramental Remembrance worthy of him, it muſt not only be in ſhewing Honour and Reverence to him ourſelves, but in a Readineſs to maintain his Honour, and promote his Intereſt among others alſo.

2*dly*, We muſt remember Chriſt our *Lord* and *Maſter*, with *Mindfulneſs of his Commands*, and *Reſolutions of Obedience*.

This is another Temper, which Lordſhip and Authority over us calls for. For the moſt proper Duty of *Subjects* towards their *Sovereigns*, and of *Servants* towards their *Maſters*, is *Obedience*, or a Carefulneſs to perform whatſoever they enjoin and require them. *Put them in Mind*, ſays the Apoſtle, *to be ſubject to Principalities and Powers, and to obey Magiſtrates*, Tit. iii. 1. And *Servants obey your Maſters in all Things, not with Eye-Service, but in Singleneſs of Heart, fearing God*, Col. iii. 22. And *Why call ye me Lord, Lord*, ſays our Saviour, *and do not the Things which I ſay?* Luke vi. 46.

Thus is Obedience the great Duty which we owe to all Maſters and Governors who are put in Authority over us. We muſt neither forget the Commands which they have left with us, nor knowingly tranſgreſs them, but carefully call them into our Minds, and conſcientiouſly practice them when we do remember and conſider what they are.

And this we are then eſpecially bound to, if they are not only our *Maſters*, but our *deareſt Friends*, and *nobleſt Benefactors* alſo. For theſe are Names that add new Bonds, and higher Obligations, which will have a great Force ſo long as there is any thing of Ingenuity left in us. And therefore ſince

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our bleſſed Maſter Jeſus, is not only our rightful Lord and Governor, but withal our moſt ſurpaſſing kind Friend and Benefactor, we ought in all Duty and Gratitude to be mindful of what he deſires, and to do any Thing that he would have us; and we deal moſt undutifully and unworthily by him, if we do otherwiſe. So that this alſo is another Inſtance of the Worthineſs of his Remembrance, to be mindful of the Laws, which he has given us, and to think of them with a Readineſs and firm Reſolution to obey them.

Theſe are the Things then, which muſt render our Remembrance worthy of him under this Relation. When we eat and drink in Commemoration of Jeſus Chriſt our *Lord and King*, we muſt *honour* and *reverence* him *ourſelves*, and be concerned to *maintain his Honour*, and *promote his Intereſts among others*, and be mindful *of all the Commands which* he has left with us, and *ſtand ready and reſolved to obey* them.

2*dly*, In eating Bread and drinking Wine at the Lord's Supper, we are to *remember* the bleſſed *Jeſus*, as our *moſt kind Friend and Benefactor*; and to do this worthily, we muſt remember him with *true Love of him*, and *Delight in him*, and *grateful Reſentments* and *hearty Thanks* for all the Kindneſſes which we have received from him.

1*ſt*, We muſt remember him our moſt *kind Friend* and *Benefactor* with *true Love*, and an *hearty Affection for him.*

This is due to him, as he is our *gracious Lord*, and indeed in every Relation that he ſtands in, ſince in all he is moſt wonderfully winning and obliging. For even there he ſeeks our own Good, in all the Commands which he lays upon us; and treats us with much Gentleneſs, and encourages ever Thing that is well in us; and pities our un-

avoidable Infirmities, and bears our many and high Provocations with invincible Patience, and ſends Meſſengers of Peace to entreat and ſue for a Reconciliation with us upon any Difference, tho' it is not his Intereſt but ours, and tho' not he but we are the Offenders; and, when he is forced to puniſh us, he doth it always with the greateſt Reluctance; but, when he can take an Occaſion to reward us, he doth that with the greateſt Joy and Chearfulneſs; all which are ſtrangely engaging, and muſt needs conſtrain all ingenuous Tempers to be heartily in love with him.

But our Love is due to him more eſpecially, as he is our *moſt kind Friend*, who loves us as he doth his own Life; and our moſt *noble Benefactor*, who has ſo infinitely obliged us, and done ſuch Kindneſſes for us, as we are not able to expreſs.

He is our *true Friend*, who eſpouſes our Intereſts as his own, and is ſenſible of all our Wants, and pained in all our Afflictions, and rejoices in all our Joys, and ſeeks to make us ſhare in his own Happineſs, and would part with any thing he hath to pleaſe us, nay, give his own Heart's Blood in any Caſe which were worth the while to do us a Kindneſs.

He is our moſt *noble Benefactor*, who has done us ſuch Kindneſſes, as are beyond all Expreſſions, having procured for us the Favour of God, the Help of the Spirit, and the aſſured Hope of eternal Happineſs, when all theſe ſeemed irrevocably loſt, and no Way attainable by us; and when he could not gain them at a leſs Rate, than by laying down his own Life for the Purchaſe.

And theſe are Endearments, which paſs all Imagination; they are ſuch Arguments to a reciprocal Love and Kindneſs, as cannot be withſtood by any Man. So that having received all this Love from him,

him, we must needs return the small Tribute of Love to him again, or else we should be the unworthiest of any Persons living.

And this is one Temper, which is necessary to a worthy Remembrance of so *kind a Friend*, and so *noble a Benefactor*, as we have of our blessed Saviour: We must love the Thoughts of him, and be most kindly affected towards him, or else we shall shew ourselves utterly unworthy of him.

2*dly*, We must remember him our most *noble Benefactor*, and the Favours which he has done us, with *Joy* and *Gladness*.

This is a Temper very necessary in us, when we would worthily commemorate the Receipt of Benefits. For when we rejoice in them, we shew what Rate we put upon them, and how much we are pleased in them, and how happy we think ourselves in that Love which has bestowed them on us. And this will make the Person who conferred them to think them well placed, and please himself in what he has done, concluding, that we, who are so sensible of a Kindness when it is shewed us, are worthy to receive one. And therefore the Scripture calls all good Men, who have received most invaluable Benefits, to Joy and Gladness. *Rejoice in the Lord, O ye Righteous*, saith the Psalmist, *for Praise is comely for the Upright*, Psal. xxxiii. 1.

And this we all ought to shew, when we commemorate those Blessings, which our blessed Saviour has conferred upon us. He has got all those Things for us, which our Hearts can wish, no less than the pure and perfect Joys of Heaven, and eternal Happiness; and these he has taken the hardest Pains, and been at the greatest Cost to compass, laying down his own Life for them, rather than he would suffer us to go without them. And

this we ought not at any Time to think of, without Joy and Gladneſs. When we reflect upon ſo great Love, and ſuch ineſtimable Benefits, it is moſt fit and reaſonable we ſhould rejoice over them, that thereby we may ſhew forth how happy we think ourſelves in them. And our bleſſed Lord may well think he threw them away upon us, and repent that ever he beſtowed them, or took ſuch Pains for them, if after all he ſees us inſenſible of what he has done, and ſtill as cold and unaffected, as if we had received nothing. So that if we would worthily commemorate the Receipt of ſo great Happineſs, we muſt do it with joyful Hearts, and chearful Looks, and an open Shew of Gladneſs; as we are told the *Diſciples* did in the *firſt* Days, who as St. *Luke* ſays, *continued daily in the Temple, and breaking Bread, eating it with Gladneſs of Heart*, Acts ii. 46.

3*dly*, We muſt remember him our moſt *noble Benefactor*, with *grateful Reſentments*, and *hearty Thanks for all his Kindneſſes*, particularly for that ineſtimable one of *his dying* for us.

In *Thankfulneſs* are implied two Things:

1*ſt*, A *grateful Acknowledgement of the Gift*, and a *Praiſing him who gave it.*

2*dly*, A *Readineſs*, and *Endeavour according to our Power, to requite it.*

It implies a grateful *Acknowledgment of the Gift*, and a *Praiſing of him that gave it.* For when we receive an undeſerved Benefit, it is very fit that we let the *Donor* know we are ſenſible thereof, and underſtand very well both our Happineſs in receiving, and his Kindneſs in beſtowing it. We muſt give him the Praiſe of his Beneficence, and expreſs a Senſe of our own Obligations: For if we fail in this, we ſhew, either that we *contemn his Gift*, and ſet no *Value* on it; or that we think it only

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a *Tribute to our own Desert*, so as that we are not *beholden* to him for it; or that we would be *independent*, and are too proud to be obliged by it; all which, had they been known to him beforehand, would have made *him*, and *all Men*, to judge us most *unworthy* to receive it.

It implies also a *Readiness*, and *Endeavour according to our Power*, to *requite it.* For Love should engage Love, and the Kindnesses which are done to us, should oblige us upon all Opportunities to do the same again. To encourage Benefits and bestow Favours, we ought to take care, that they who gave them, may never have just Cause to repent of them, and to let them see, that if we had the Power and Opportunity, we would do as much for them. For Kindnesses should be a Sort of *Loans*, which, upon any fit Occasion, are to be repaid back to him who shew'd them, that so all Men may be encouraged to abound in them, and never be hindred from the same, by a Fear, lest afterwards they should be offended with themselves for having bestowed them. And if any Man is either so *stupid*, or so *proud*, that he will take no Notice of them, nor endeavour afterwards to requite them, by the Consent of all, he is unfit to be dealt with in this *generous* Way of Love, and is utterly unworthy to receive them.

Thus doth Thankfulness imply, both an affectionate Acknowledgment of the Gift, and praising him who gave it; and also a Readiness, and Endeavour according to our Power, to requite it.

And this we owe in the highest Measure to our Saviour Christ, and must be sure always to pay it to him, when we commemorate the inestimable Benefits which we have received from him. We must not remember the great Things which he has done for us, in delivering us from eternal Death,

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and in gaining for us the Favour of God, and the Joys of Heaven, when it coſt him no leſs than his own Heart's Blood for the Purchaſe, without affectionate Reſentments, and Mouths full of Praiſe, and a fix'd Readineſs and Reſolution of Mind to make what ſmall Requital we are able in our Zeal for his Service, and in our Kindneſs to his *Brethren*, whom he looks upon as his own Members, reſenting any Good that is *done to them*, *as if it were done to himſelf*, Matth. xxv. 40. And this Duty of Thankfulneſs, is a moſt eſpecial Requiſite to our worthy Commemoration of his Benefits in this Feaſt. For *praiſing God*, is reckoned as one Particular of the Diſciples Carriage in their *breaking Bread*, Acts ii. *They continued daily breaking Bread*, ſays St. *Luke*, *which they eat with Gladneſs*, *praiſing God*, v. 46, 47. Nay, ſo great a Share has Thankſgiving and Praiſe in this Buſineſs, that the whole Action is called the *Euchariſt*, *i. e.* the giving of Thanks to God, for thoſe Benefits which are commemorated therein.

And theſe are the Things, which muſt render our Remembrance worthy of him, when we commemorate him as our *Friend* and *Benefactor* in this holy Supper. We muſt *love* him for his Kindneſſes, and *delight* in his Benefits, and be *thankful* for all his Favours, particularly for that which is therein eſpecially commemorated, his *dying* upon our Accounts, burſting out into *grateful Acknowledgments* and *Words of Praiſe*, and being *ready* and *reſolved* by our *Zeal in his Service*, our *Obſervance of his Laws*, and our *Kindneſs to his poor Members*, to make him all the ſmall *Requital* we are able, ſo that he may never have any Cauſe to repent of what he has done for us.

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But beſides this Remembrance of his Friendſhip to us, and *Benefits* in *general*, which require in us theſe forementioned Tempers; we are *eſpecially* to commemorate the *Benefits of his dying for us*, which more particularly calls for certain other Tempers.

In eating Bread and drinking Wine in the Lord's Supper, I ſay, we are to remember *his dying for us*, and ſhedding his *precious Blood a Ranſom for our Sins.* And to do this worthily, we muſt *be humbled under the Senſe of our own Unworthineſs*, and *abhor our Sins* which brought him to bleed and die for us, and *reſign up ourſelves*, both Souls and Bodies, to *his Uſe*, as we are bought with his Blood, and therefore become his own Purchaſe.

1*ſt*, We muſt remember his dying for us, in *an humble and deep Senſe of our own Unworthineſs*, and in an *utter Abhorrence of our Sins*, *which brought him to theſe Sufferings.*

We muſt remember it, I ſay, in *an humble and deep Senſe of our own Unworthineſs.* His Death was not for any Thing that he had done, but only for our Sins; and this ſhews what *vile Wretches* we are, and how *unworthy Perſons.* It lets us ſee, how *hateful* our Sins have made us unto *God*, and what they had *deſerv'd* at his Hands. For he would not let them paſs, without inflicting the higheſt Shame, and the moſt exquiſite Pain and Tortures. Yea, when his own only begotten Son would intercede for them, and bear the Burthen of them in his own Perſon, ſo implacable was the Hatred which he had to them, and ſo indiſpenſable were the Reaſons which conſtrained him to puniſh them, that his moſt tender Love for him, whom he valued as his own right Eye, could not hinder but that he ſhould bleed and die for them. It lets us ſee alſo, how *troubleſome* they had made us to our

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beſt Friends, and how ſhamefully *burthenſome* and *expenſive* to the *bleſſed Jeſus*. For when he long'd and labour'd to redeem us from them, he could not be *our* Friend, unleſs he would ceaſe to be *his own*, nor do us any good at all, except he would give his own Life a Ranſom for us. And what Man now can ever think of this, but he muſt hide his Face, and be quite buried in a ſhameful Senſe of his own Unworthineſs? He may ſee how vile he was when God was ſo highly offended with him, and thought no Puniſhment too heavy for him, and would not be reconcil'd at the Interceſſion of his own Son, unleſs he would die inſtead of him; and when it was ſo dangerous and coſtly a Thing, no leſs than the laying down his own Life, for his Saviour to ſhew himſelf a ſerviceable Friend to him. And if this Sight doth not work Shame and Self-Abaſement in him, he will be concluded by all, to be the baſeſt Man alive, and utterly unworthy that ever any Thing of all this unparallel'd Kindneſs ſhould have been done for him.

We muſt alſo remember his dying for us, with *an utter Abhorrence of our Sins, which were the Cauſes of his Sufferings.* For if we do not hate and abhor them, when we conſider what Tortures he endured for them, we ſhew that we are very little concern'd for his Eaſe, nor have any Feeling of his Pains, nor any Zeal at all againſt the Occaſion of his Sorrows. And this is a very bad Requital of his undergoing all thoſe Pains for our Sakes, and a moſt unworthy Uſage. So that if we would worthily commemorate his dying for us, we muſt be humbled and aſhamed of ourſelves, at the Senſe of our own Unworthineſs, ſeeing we had deſerved ſuch inſupportable Puniſhments, and have put him to ſuch exquiſite and intenſe Pains; and particularly we muſt turn our Abhorrence on our Sins,

Sins, which caused all this Mischief, and made him, if he would befriend us, to undergo such heavy Tortures himself.

2*dly*, We must remember his dying for us, with a *Resignation of ourselves*, both *Souls and Bodies*, *to his Use*, *as we are bought with his Blood*, *and thereby become his own Purchase*.

He died in our stead, and his Blood was given to God for a *Ransom*, to buy us off from Death, that we might not die also. *The Son of Man*, saith he, *is come to give his Life a Ransom for many*, Mat. xx. 28. And since he has bought us, and paid so dear for us, to deliver us from Hell-Torments and Eternal Death, which is not *his*, but *our own* Advantage; in all Equity and Reason he ought to have the Use of us, and we should be wholly devoted to his Service: And this the Scripture requires of us: *The Love of God constrains us*, saith St. *Paul*, to live in him, *because we thus judge*, *that if one died*, *for all*, *then were all dead*; *and that he died for all*, *that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves*, *but unto him that died for them*, 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. And again, *Ye are not your own*, *ye are bought with a Price*; *therefore glorify God in your Body and in your Spirit*, *which are God's*, 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. And since his dying for us has made us his own Property, and he has thereby acquired an absolute Right over us for his own Use, which we had infinite Reason to desire, but he had no need of; if we would remember it *worthily*, we must do it *justly*, by honestly devoting our Souls and Bodies, and assigning them over to him, to be wholly at his Service.

And these are the Things, which must render our Remembrance worthy of him, when in the Holy Sacrament we commemorate his dying for

us, and ſhedding of his moſt precious Blood a Ranſom for our Sins. We muſt be *humbled* with the Senſe of our own Unworthineſs, and *abhor our Sins*, which brought him to theſe Sufferings, and *reſign up ourſelves*, both Bodies and Souls, to be wholly at his Uſe, and imployed where and in what he pleaſes, as thereby they are become his own Purchaſe.

And thus it appears what Tempers are becoming us, and worthy of this *firſt* End of Eating and Drinking in the Holy Sacrament, *viz.* the *Remembrance of our Lord and Saviour Chriſt, and of his dying for us.* We muſt remember him, with *Honour* and *Reverence*, with a *careful Concern to maintain* and *promote his Honour* among others, with *Mindfulneſs of his Commands*, and *Reſolutions of Obedience*, as he is *Lord* over us: With *Love* of him for his Kindneſs, and *delight* in his Benefits, and *thankful Acknowledgments*, and *Words of Praiſe*, and *grateful Returns*, in any thing which he can receive, or we can give, for *all* his Favours, particularly for his *dying on our Account*, as he has ſo *highly befriended*, and *infinitely obliged* us; and with an *humble Senſe of our own Unworthineſs*, and an *utter Abhorrence of all our Sins*, which were the Cauſes of his Sufferings, and with an *intire Reſignation of ourſelves*, both Souls and Bodies, to his Uſe, to be imploy'd as his own Purchaſe in what he pleaſes, as his Death was a *Sacrifice* for our Sins, wherewith he bought and redeemed us. All theſe are Duties, which, were he now before us, and converſing with us, we ought to pay to him; and which therefore in our Remembrance of him, which makes him preſent to our Minds, we muſt not deny him: and in Them doth conſiſt the Worthineſs of this Remembrance and Commemoration.

2*dly*, A *ſecond* End of our Eating Bread and Drinking Wine in the Lord's Supper, is to *confirm the*

the New Covenant with Almighty God, which Christ purchased for us by his Death: And to do this *worthily*, we must come to it in *Sincerity* and *Faithfulness*, and with *full Purpose* and *Performance* of that *Repentance and Obedience*, which therein we solemnly *profess* and make *promise* of.

We must come to it, I say, in *Sincerity* and *Faithfulness*. The great Qualification which is requisite in all Compacts, is *Faithfulness*. For they are the great Means of Security among Men, and the great Thing, which they have to depend upon in their Expectations from each other; and therefore it is both *pretended* and *expected* by all who make them, that they will not prove false and deceitful in them. Every Man who covenants, expects of those whom he contracts withal, that they should mean what they profess, and perform what they promise; and makes shew also himself, that he will do so likewise. And if he doth not, he is a very dishoneſt unworthy Man, such as the *Gospel* condemns, and will sentence for the same in the End, unless he repent thereof, to eternal Destruction: *Covenant-breakers* being ranked among those, who in the *Judgment of God are worthy of Death*, Rom. i. 31, 32.

And this *Sincerity* or *Faithfulness* consists in this, that we come with *full Purpose* and *Performance*, of that *Repentance* and *Obedience*, which we *profess* and make *promise* of. In this Covenant, to all us *Believers*, God *offers at present a Right to Pardon*, his *Holy Spirit*, and *Eternal Happiness*; and we again *profess*, and humbly make offer unto him, of our *Repentance* and *Obedience*. And this Right *he promises* still to *continue* to us upon the same Terms; and answerably *we promise* to perform them upon that Expectation for ever afterwards. And both in these *Professions*, and *Promises*, we must deal sincerely

with him: and neither pretend a preſent Offer of them, when we want them; nor make Promiſes of them for the Time to come, when we have no fix'd Deſign and well-weighed Reſolution to perform them.

When we come therefore to renew our *Baptiſmal Engagement*, and to confirm the New Covenant with Almighty God, giving him both the *Profeſſion* and the *Promiſe of theſe Duties*, and receiving from him the *Proffer* and the *Promiſe* of *theſe Graces*, we muſt be hearty aud unfeigned with him. Our Souls muſt really be acted by that Repentance which we profeſs, and fully intend to make good that Obedience which we promiſe. And if we perform in both theſe, we are *faithful* and *ſincere* in this Buſineſs; but if we fail in either, we are *Diſſemblers* and *Hypocrites*, who *act a Part*, and go to impoſe upon Almighty God, which is a very *unworthy* Part of us.

And this Sincerity God expreſly calls for at this Feaſt, and requires us to be faithful with him, when we come to confirm the New Covenant, by partaking of it. *Chriſt our Paſſover*, ſays St. *Paul*, *is ſacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the Feaſt, not with the Leaven of Malice and Wickedneſs*, by adhereing ſtill to our former wicked Ways, which therefore we are to repent of, *but with the unleavened Bread of Sincerity and Truth*, 1 Cor. v. 7, 8. And as for *Repentance* particularly, which is the great Condition of the Covenant that is renewed in it, it is the great Qualification of all worthy Receivers, and is moſt indiſpenſably required in this Holy Sacrament. It is the chief Thing which is look'd at in *every Confirmation of the Covenant*, and therefore is ſo peremptorily called for when we are * *baptized:* It is the only Thing that can † *recommend a Sacri-*

* Acts ii. 38. Luke iii. 3. † Pſal. li. 17.

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fice, and therefore is the main Point which must fit us for *this Feast upon a Sacrifice*. And this the ancient Church always thought of it; as it plainly shew'd, when at the Celebration of the Eucharist, the Bishop cried out, * *These holy Things must be taken only by holy Persons*; and as St. *Ambrose* clearly informs us, when he says, † *This is the Order of dispensing this MYSTERY which every Church observes, that first upon their true Repentance their Sins may be forgiven them, and then this Heavenly Food shall be administred and reached out to them.*

As this Eating and Drinking then is a fœderal Rite, and in Confirmation of the New Covenant, it requires that we should be faithful and sincere in doing of the same. And then we come worthily, and partake of it as we ought, when we truly *repent* of all our Sins, according as we profess; and are *fully purposed*, according as we promise, at all times after so to do.

3dly, A third End of our Eating Bread and Drinking Wine in the Lord's Supper, is, to *confirm a League of love and Friendship with all Christians:* And this requires that we lay aside all *Envy*, *Hatred*, and *malicious Thoughts*; and come to it in *Peace* and *Forgiveness* of all who have any ways offended us.

We must not come to it in *Envy*, *Hatred*, and *malicious Thoughts*; for that were to give the Lye to ourselves, and to contradict our own Professions. For when we come there to partake of that *one*

* Ὁ ἐπίσκοπος προσφωνησάτω, τῷ λαῷ ἕτω τὰ ἅγια τοῖς ἁγίοις. Constit. Apost. l. 8. c. 13. p. 484. Tom. prim. Concil. Ed. Par. Lab.

† Ubique mysterii ordo servatur, ut prius per remissionem peccatorum vulneribus medicina tribuatur, postea alimonia mensæ Cœlestis exuberet. *S. Ambros. Comment. in Luc. l.* 6. *c.* 9.

Bread, we profeſs ourſelves, as has been ſhewn, to be all *one Body*, and that we are all the *Body of Chriſt*, and *Members one of another*. We ſolemnly declare, that we will be Friends, from that Day forwards, with all Perſons, and fully reconciled even to our bitter Enemies, and to thoſe who have given us the higheſt Provocations, tho' not for their own Sakes, yet for the Sake of the bleſſed *Jeſus*, who has bore a thouſand Times more from us, and deſerves infinitely beyond what this comes to at our Hands. We promiſe mutually, that we will lay aſide all little Piques, and not fall out into Quarrels or Contentions, nor bear Ill-will, or be vexatious among ourſelves, nor ſeek our own Pleaſure, Honour, or Advantage, at our Brethrens Loſs. But that we will all have a compaſſionate Senſe of each other's Infirmities, and a tender Concern and diligent Care for each other's Welfare; that we will live as Members of the ſame Body, which all feel what befalls any, and are all ſolaced with the ſame Joys, and all languiſh in the ſame Sorrows, and all unite in the ſame Ends, and all bear the Weakneſſes, and ſupply the Needs, and ſeek the Good and Pleaſure of each other, as they do their own. All this Good-will and Brotherly-kindneſs, Peace and Forgiveneſs towards all Perſons, we profeſs in eating together at this Feaſt, and therefore it is moſt unworthy Dealing if we want them, and are even then acted by Hatred, Envy, and malicious Thoughts, which are moſt oppoſite and contrary to them.

Thus it is neceſſary when we confirm this League of Love and Friendſhip to our Brethren, that we lay aſide all Envy and Ill-will, and have perfect Charity towards all Men. And this Charity muſt be ſhewn, as in *Prayers* and *good Wiſhes* at *all Times*, and in *courteous Carriage* and *good Offices*, as oft as we

we have *Opportunity*, towards *all Perſons*; ſo particularly in giving *Alms*, and affording Relief to ſuch as are in *Want* and *Neceſſity*. For the League of Love whereinto we are then to enter, and which Chriſt exacts of us, is not only to beſtow *fair Words*, or *compaſſionate Looks*, or *faint Wiſhes*; but if we are able, to *relieve* as we have Opportunity, and ſupply thoſe who ſtand in Need of our Subſtance. *If a Brother or Siſter be naked*, ſays St. *James*, *or deſtitute of daily Food, and one of you ſay to them, depart in Peace, be ye warmed or filled, notwithſtanding ye give them not thoſe things which are neceſſary for the Body, what doth it profit?* Jam. ii. 15, 16. *My little Children*, ſaith St. *John*, *let us not love in Word* only, *neither in Tongue, but in Deed and in Truth: And hereby, i. e.* by this uſeful operative Charity, *we know that we are of the Truth, and ſhall aſſure our Hearts before him*, 1 Joh. iii. 18, 19. And thus the *ancient Chriſtians* conſtantly uſed to do, in the Apoſtles Times. For then at every Lord's Supper, they had another Supper of their own, which they call'd a *Love Feaſt*, or *Feaſt of Charity*, Jud. 12. This conſiſted of ſuch Proviſions, as every Communicant brought along with him; they who were *rich* brought in much, and the *poorer* Sort leſs, but when it came, they all ſate down in a Brotherly Way, and ſhared in common: Which when the *Corinthians* failed to do, every one eating as they came, without tarrying for their Brethren, and the Rich taking their own large Portions to themſelves; and leaving the Poor to bluſh at the Scantineſs of theirs; the Apoſtle reproved them ſharply, telling them how much they prophaned this Holy Feaſt by ſuch corrupt Uſage. *In eating*, ſays he, at this Feaſt, inſtead of joining all like loving Brethren at a common Supper, *Every one taketh before other his*

own Supper, or that which he brought for his own Share: *And one* who brought little, *is hungry* through his Scarceneſs; *and another*, who brought much, *is drunken* with the Exceſs of his. *Shall I praiſe you in this? I praiſe you not*, 1 Cor. xi. 21, 22. And when this Way of being charitable to the Poor at this Feaſt, was laid aſide, by reaſon of Abuſes crept into the ſame, another was ſtill uſed, which to this Day is practiſed in moſt and the beſt of our Churches, as it is fit it ſhould be in all, and that is, having *Offerings for the Poor* at every Communion, which may afterwards be diſtributed among them. Which is a moſt proper Way, and excellent Opportunity, not only of exerciſing that Charity which therein we profeſs to them; but alſo of expreſſing our Thankfulneſs to our Bleſſed Saviour, for the invaluable Benefits which we have received from him. For in being thus kind to his poor Members, whom he is ſo tenderly concerned for, we make ſome ſlight Return and poor Requital unto him, who puts their Receipts upon his own Score, taking what we do to them as done to his own Perſon. *Inaſmuch as ye have done it unto theſe my Brethren, ye have done it unto me*, Mat. xxv. 40.

And theſe are the Things which muſt render our eating and drinking, as it is in *Confirmation* of a *League of Love and Friendſhip with all our Brethren*, worthy of that Signification. We muſt lay aſide all *Envy* and *malicious Thoughts*, and come to it in *Forgiveneſs* of all thoſe who have offended us, and in *Charity* to all our Neighbours, which we muſt expreſs, as in other Things, ſo particularly in *giving Alms* to ſuch whoſe Neceſſities require it of us.

And all theſe the *Scripture* itſelf marks out, as neceſſary Qualifications in all *worthy Communicants*. *Let us keep the Feaſt*, ſays the Apoſtle, *not with the Leaven of Malice*, 1 Cor. v. 8. *When ye come together*

ther into one Place, says he again, *I hear there be Divisions among you*; *And*, when there are so, *this is not to eat the Lord's Supper*, one End whereof is to unite you, 1 *Cor.* xi. 18, 20. *If thou bring thy Gift to the Altar*, says our Saviour, *and there remembrest that thy Brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy Gift before the Altar, and go and first be reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy Gift*, Mat. v. 23, 24. And as for the *Distribution of Alms* at this Time; that, as we saw, was the *Apostolical* Way in the *Love-feasts*, as also in the *Collections for the Poor, as every Man had laid by him in Store*, on the *first Day of the Week* (when they always had a Sacrament) which St. *Paul* mentions, 1 *Cor.* xvi. 2. And when these Feasts failed, yet these Collections and Offerings at the Lord's Table still continued, and do in most Places, which in this Respect are fit to be Patterns to all others, unto this Day.

And thus at last we see, wherein the *Worthiness* of eating and drinking in this holy Feast consists, and what Tempers and Dispositions in us, are worthy of all those Ends, which are signified and designed by it. We must eat and drink, in *Remembrance of Jesus Christ*, and of his *dying for us*, with *Honour* and *Reverence*, with a *careful Concern to maintain and promote his Honour* among others, with *Mindfulness of his Commands*, and *Resolutions of Obedience*, as he is *Lord* over us: With Love of him for his Kindness, and *Delight* in his Benefits, *and thankful Acknowledgments*, and *grateful Returns for all his Favours*, particularly for his submitting to *taste Death on our Account*, as he so highly *befriended*, and *infinitely obliged us:* and with an *humble Sense of our own Unworthiness*, and an *utter Abhorrence of all our Sins*, which were the Causes of all his Sufferings; and with an *intire Resignation of ourselves*, both Souls and Bodies, *to his Use*, to be em-

employed as his own Purchaſe in what he pleaſes, as his Death was a *Sacrifice for our Sins*, wherewith he bought and redeemed us. We muſt eat and drink in *Confirmation of the New Covenant*, profeſſing our Conſent to the Terms thereof, and our Reſolution to ſtand by it, in all *Sincerity* and *Faithfulneſs*; coming to it with that true *Repentance* of all our Sins, and with thoſe *obedient Hearts* which we profeſs; and with a *full Purpoſe* of making all that good afterwards which we promiſed in the ſame. And, laſtly, we muſt eat and drink *in Confirmation of a League of Love and Friendſhip with all our Brethren*, laying aſide all *Envy* and *Malice* towards them, and making *Reſtitution* where we have wronged them, and *forgiving* them heartily where we have any Grudge againſt them; and giving *Alms* as our Ability and their Neceſſities ſhall require the ſame, and ſo being in perfect *Peace* and *Charity* with all Men.

And if we *believe all theſe Things*, and are carried on by ſuch Belief to *all theſe Tempers* and *Performances*, we have that *Faith* which will render us *worthy Communicants*, and acceptable to God at all other Times. If we *believe Jeſus Chriſt* to be our *Lord* and *Maſter*, and thereupon do *reverence*, *honour*, and *obey him*; if we *believe* him to be our beſt *Friend* and *Benefactor*, and thereupon do *love* him, and delight in him, and are thankful to him; if we *believe that he ſhed his own Heart's Blood for our Sins*, and for the *Redemption of our Souls*, and thereupon are *humbled with the Senſe of our own Unworthineſs*, and *abhor our Sins*, which have proved ſo miſchievous, and *reſign* up both our Souls and Bodies *wholly to his Uſe*, as they are his own *Purchaſe:* If we *believe* that his *Death procured* us the *Grace* and *Bleſſings of the New Covenant*, which promiſes all *Believers Pardon upon their*

their Repentance, and the *Holy Spirit's Help upon their own ſincere Endeavours*, and *eternal Life upon their intire Obedience*; and thereupon do *heartily conſent* to it, and perform that *Repentance* and *Obedience* which are the Conditions thereof, and are *faithful* and *ſincere* in our Promiſes and Reſolutions to ſtand by the ſame. And, laſtly, if we *believe* that he requires us to *love*, and *live in Peace* with all the World; and thereupon in this holy Sacrament do *confirm a League of Friendſhip with all our Brethren*, laying aſide all *Enmity and Hatred*, and being in perfect *Charity* with all Men: If we have all this *Faith*, I ſay, which, as appears, is thoroughly exerciſed in this bleſſed Sacrament; and can ſhew all theſe *Fruits* thereof, in theſe Tempers and Performances being effected by it; we have that *true*, *ſaving*, and *juſtifying Faith*, which the *Scripture* ſpeaks of, which *purifies the Heart*, Acts xv. 9. and *works by Love*, Gal. v. 6. and is *lively in good Works*, Jam. ii. 20, 26. And this will make us *worthy Communicants* at this Feaſt, and welcome to God at all other Times.

CHAP. III.

A further Account of this Worthineſs.

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Theſe recited Tempers are neceſſary in the Perſon communicating, but are not all neceſſary to be expreſly exerciſed in the Time of Communion. A Direction in which of theſe Tempers it may be fit to lay out our Devotion at that Time. All theſe are pro-

provided for in the Church's Prayers, so that we may exercise them worthily, if we go along devoutly at all the Parts of the Communion-Service.

IN the *former* Chapter, I have reckon'd up those Tempers which render us *worthy Communicants*, and fit us to be bidden welcome at the *Lord's Supper*, whensoever he is pleased to invite and call us thither.

But of them I must observe, that altho' they are *necessary in the Person communicating*; yet are they *not all of Necessity, to be particularly and expresly insisted on in the Time of Communion.*

They are *all necessary*, I say, *in the Person communicating*, and he is not worthy to *remember* such a *Lord* and *Saviour*, to *sign the new Covenant with Almighty God*, and a *League of Amity* and *Friendship with all the Christian World*, who wants any of them. They are altogether *due* from us, as we have seen, and may in all Reason be *expected* of us, as we stand in these *Relations*, and are admitted to these *Employments:* So that we act *unworthily*, and fail of our Duty, if our Souls are not endowed with them, when we are in those Capacities, and about those Performances which do so justly challenge and call for them.

But they are *not all necessary to be particularly* and *expresly insisted on in the Time of Communion.* They will be all *implied*, it is true, and *virtually contained* in what is then done; but they are not all necessary to be *particularly insisted on.* And for this there is a very good Reason, because that Time doth not ordinarily allow sufficient Space for the same. For most Communicants are not of such active Minds and quick Apprehensions, as that they can pursue so many Businesses, or work themselves up into an express Fervour of so many parti-

particular Tempers at one Exercise. And those that are, chuse rather often-times to fix upon some few, that so, having the more Time to stay upon them, they may raise themselves up to greater Degrees, and act them over in much higher Measures. And because, where all cannot be exercised, it is of great Use to know which are best and fittest to be singled out, I shall here set down which of all those Tempers I conceive it were most proper to stir up at that Time, and vigorously to exert and heighten in our own Minds.

If any, then, who come to the Holy Communion, find that they are either *tired out* with the *Length*, or *distracted* by the *Variety* of *many* Particulars, and that their Devotion in this Feast goes better on, and is more full and perfect when they restrain it to a *few*; I think they may do well to lay it out in these that follow.

In *remembring* our Saviour Christ, who, as then we are to believe, *died* for us, and purchased us the *New Covenant* by his Death, offering us the Pardon of our Sins, upon our true Repentance, and his Grace and holy Spirit to help on our sincere Endeavours, and eternal Life upon our intire Obedience: In remembring him, I say, we may do well to shew,

1*st*, A *joyful* and *affectionate Thankfulness* for this his unspeakable Love and Benefits, particularly for his dying for us.

2*d*, An *intire Resignation of ourselves*, both Souls and Bodies, *to his Use*, as they are his own Purchase: In which *two* consists the main Worthiness of this Part, they being the Things which are most becoming us in this Remembrance.

And in *confirming the New Covenant* with Almighty God, whereto we must believe we are then invited, we may add,

3*d*, *Repentance of all our Sins*, particularly of all thoſe which we find are moſt apt to win upon us; and *make him Promiſes* that in all the Inſtances of Duty, but in them eſpecially, we will join our Endeavours to his Grace, and obey his righteous Laws; and when we promiſe this, it muſt be with a *ſincere* and *faithful Heart*, and with full Intentions of Performance, which are the great Duty incumbent on us in theſe Engagements.

And in *confirming a League of Love* and *Friendſhip with all our Brethren*, which we muſt think with ourſelves that we are then called to likewiſe, we may exerciſe,

4*th*, *Charity towards all Perſons*, forgiving all who have any ways offended us, and laying aſide all Envy, Strife, and malicious Thoughts, and reſolving to ſhew Kindneſs both in Word and Deed to all about us, nay to all Men, as we have Ability and Opportunity, but to the *Poor* eſpecially, who ought not to be forgotten at ſuch Times; which is the great Thing required of us, and becoming us in this Part of the Service.

So that when we come to the *holy Communion*, where we are all called to *remember Chriſt*, particularly in his *Death*, to *ſeal the New Covenant with God*, and a *League of Friendſhip with our Brethren*; we may do well to expreſs ourſelves *joyfully* and *affectionately thankful* for all his Kindneſſes, eſpecially that of his dying for us, and *reſign up ourſelves*, both Souls and Bodies, to his Service, and *repent of all our Sins*, making him faithful and unfeigned Promiſes of our Amendment of the ſame, particularly of thoſe wherein we are moſt liable to do amiſs, and ſhew ourſelves in *Peace* and *perfect Charity* with all Perſons. By theſe Things we ſhall duly anſwer the Ends of this Feaſt, and in them lies the great Worthineſs of our Carriage at it.

And

And this our *Church* has sufficiently intimated to us in her *publick Catechism*, when in Return to that *Question*, *what is required* of them that come to the Lord's Supper? It gives this *Answer*; To *repent them truly of all their Sins*, *stedfastly purposing to lead a new Life*; *to have a lively Faith in God's Mercy thro' Christ* (which as we have seen, is thorowly exercised from the *Beginning* to the *End* of this holy Sacrament) *to have a thankful Remembrance of his Death*, *and be in Charity with all Men.*

When we come therefore to the holy Sacrament, whilst the Minister himself is communicating, or whilst *others* are receiving, we may lay out ourselves on these Things, and spend the Time in the Exercise of these Duties, acting them over in devout Prayers and holy Meditations by ourselves. Or if we are not able of ourselves, but need the Help of others to suggest Thoughts, and to go along with us in this Service, let us join heartily in the *Church's Prayers*, which it has appointed for this Purpose: For in them we have an Exercise of all these Virtues, and they have excellently provided for our Needs in this Case; so that we may duly express these Tempers, if we are careful to join fervently with the Minister in all the Parts of the *Communion Service.* And because it may be of Use to some, to see how all these Duties are exercised in it, that so, being aware of it, they may particularly design them when they come to it; I will shew it of them all particularly.

1. It leads us on to an *affectionate Thankfulness* and *joyful Praise*, the *first* great Qualification, in a Strain which truly to me is most transporting: For thus it helps us to give Thanks *before* Receiving. *It is very meet, right, and our bounden Duty, that we should at all Times, and in all Places, give Thanks*

Thanks unto thee, O Lord, holy Father, almighty, everlasting God: Therefore with Angels, and Archangels, and all the Company of Heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious Name, evermore praising thee, and saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts, Heaven and Earth are full of thy Glory: Glory be to thee, O Lord most High.

And thus again *after* it:

Glory be to God on High, and in Earth Peace, and Good-will towards Men. We praise thee, we bless thee, we worship thee, we glorify thee, we give Thanks to thee for thy great Glory, O Lord God, Heavenly King, God the Father Almighty.

O Lord the only begotten Son Jesus Christ, O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the Sins of the World, have Mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the Sins of the World have Mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the Sins of the World, receive our Prayers. Thou that sittest at the right Hand of God the Father, have Mercy upon us.

For thou art only Holy, thou only art the Lord, thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the Glory of God the Father.

All which are Words expressing *joyful Praise* and *affectionate Thankfulness* so meltingly, that better, I think, have not yet been thought of.

2. It leads us also to *resign up ourselves*, both Souls and Bodies, *to his Service*, in the Prayer immediately *after* receiving, in these Words.

And here we offer and present unto thee, O Lord, ourselves, our Souls and Bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively Sacrifice unto thee; humbly beseeching thee, that all we who are Partakers of this Holy Communion, may be fulfilled with thy Grace and heavenly Benediction.

3. It

3. It leads us in profeſſing an *humble* and *hearty Repentance of all our Sins*, and making God our *faithful Promiſes of new Obedience*, in the *Invitation* to communicate, and in the *Confeſſion* of Sins *before* receiving, in theſe Words:

Ye that do truly and earneſtly repent you of your Sins, and intend to lead a new Life, following the Commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy Ways; draw near with Faith, and take this Holy Sacrament to your Comfort, and make your humble Confeſſion to almighty God, meekly kneeling upon your Knees.

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, &c. *We acknowledge and bewail our manifold Sins and Wickedneſs, which we from Time to Time moſt grievouſly have committed, by Thought, Word, and Deed, againſt thy Divine Majeſty,* &c. *We do earneſtly repent, and are heartily ſorry for theſe our Miſ-doings,* &c.

And to prepare us for this Profeſſion of Repentance in *this Place* of the Service, I think it very adviſeable to take what Time there is, whilſt the Bread and Wine are in preparing before the *Beginning* of the *Office*, to recollect our *particular* Sins which we are moſt liable to incur, and at *every one* of them to make God Promiſes, and fix Reſolutions of amending them in our Minds; after which we may the better ſay in *general*, we *repent* of them, and will no more commit the ſame; and thereupon beg *Pardon* for them, and receive *Abſolution*, as it is in this Part of the *Service*.

4. *And laſtly*, It leads us to act *Peace* and *Charity* towards all Men, when in the *Exhortation before* Receiving, it tells us we muſt *be in perfect Charity with all Men*; and in the *Invitation*, calls ſuch as *are in Love and Charity with all their Neighbours*: At which Words our Hearts may ſtrike in with it,

and earneſtly profeſs that they at *preſent* are, and are fully reſolved at all Times *afterwards* ſo to be.

Thus doth the *Church* itſelf, in our *publick Service*, go before us; and lead us on in theſe great Duties of *joyful Praiſe* and *Thankfulneſs*, of *Reſignation of ourſelves*, of *Repentance* and *faithful Purpoſes* and *Promiſes* of *Obedience*, and of *Charity to all Perſons*, which are to render us welcome Gueſts, and worthy Communicants. Nay, it doth not only call us to, and bear us Company in theſe *chief Duties*, wherein above all conſiſts a *Receiver's Worthineſs*, but alſo in *moſt others* mentioned above, ſo that ſcarce any Duty is required in us at this Feaſt, but, if our Hearts go along with the Office, it puts the ſame in act, and makes a Place for it.

It exerciſes our *humble Senſe of our own Unworthineſs* in the Prayer *before Conſecration*, in theſe Words: *We do not preſume to come to this thy Table, O merciful Lord, truſting in our Righteouſneſs, but in thy manifold and great Mercies. We are not worthy ſo much as to gather the Crumbs under thy Table.* And ſo again in the Prayer *after receiving*, in theſe: *Tho' we be unworthy, through our manifold Sins, to offer up unto thee any Sacrifice; yet humbly we beſeech thee, accept this our bounden Duty and Service; not weighing our Merits, but pardoning our Offences, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord.*

It exerciſes our *Hatred* and *Abhorrence of our Sins*, which cauſed Chriſt's Sufferings; in the *Confeſſion of Repentance*, in theſe: *The Remembrance of our Miſ-doings is grievous unto us, the Burden of them is intolerable.*

And it exerciſes our *Love*, and *Reverence*, and *Honour to Chriſt*, either in *Words* that *expreſs* it, or in *Things* that *imply* it, being *real* Proofs and Effects

fects thereof, in every thing that is done through the whole Service.

If every Receiver therefore who *has* these Tempers, doth but *go along heartily* and *affectionately* with the *Church's Prayers*, and join with the *Minister* and the *Congregation* in the *Communion Service*; he acts them over as he ought, and doth Honour to his Saviour, and is a worthy Communicant: He shews all those Qualifications which God has required, and receives as a worthy Guest, if he can do nothing more than go along and strike in heartily at every Part of the *publick Worship*. And if, when he wants Help and Employments for his Thoughts, he join heartily in the Prayer, which is made at the Offering of the Bread and Wine to others, either before or after he has received the same himself. Which I speak not for the Ease of those, who, either by their *own Invention*, or the *Help of Books*, can set their own Minds on Work, and employ their own Thoughts in meditating and acting over all these Tempers, whilst the Minister is distributing the blessed Sacrament: I speak it not, I say, for the Ease of these Persons, as if, beside what they do in the Church's Prayers, they should not moreover do what they can otherwise: But for the Sake of others who have not these Abilities, that they may not be discouraged; and to let them know, that, if they are good Men, and *have* these Tempers, there is *Exercise* of them sufficient in the *publick Prayers*, were there nothing else from the Help of *Books*, or their own *Invention*, to make them *worthy Communicants*.

And thus we see wherein lies the *Worthiness of Receiving*, and what Virtues are fit for him to exercise, who would be a welcome Guest at the *Holy Communion*. When he *remembers the Death of*

Christ, and *confirms the New Covenant with almighty God*, and a *League of Love and Friendship with all the Christian World*, by *eating Bread* and *drinking Wine*, according to Christ's Appointment, he must exercise himself in *joyful Praise*, and *affectionate Thanks*, and *Resignation of his whole Man*, both Soul and Body, *to Christ's Service*, and in *Repentance of all his Sins*, making God faithful Promises of new Obedience, and in *Charity towards all Persons:* All which he may express in joining heartily with the *Church's Prayers*, besides what he doth whilst the Bread and Wine are in preparing, or whilst others are communicating, in his *own Meditations*. And if he believes these Things, and is carried on by such Belief to these Performances; he is welcome to the Table of our Lord, and may justly esteem himself a worthy Partaker of this blessed Sacrament.

CHAP. IV.

Worthy Receiving not extraordinary difficult; and of Unworthiness to communicate.

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To silence the Complaint of extraordinary Difficulty of coming worthily to this Sacrament, three Things noted. 1. *All the Particulars of worthy Receiving, are necessary Parts of Duty, and of a good Man: So that no more is required to fit us for receiving the Holy Sacrament, than is required to fit us to die, or to go to Heaven.* 2. *They are all* eccs-

neceſſary Qualifications of an acceptable Prayer, Vow, or Thankſgiving; ſo that no more is required to it, than to a worthy Diſcharge of all other Acts of Religion. 3. However they may be commanded, yet are they not neceſſarily required, in more intenſe and tranſporting Degrees in it, than in other Inſtances of Devotion. The only Unworthineſs which can put us by this Ordinance, is Impenitence: If Repentance will go down with any Man, nothing elſe need ſtick with him. This Point of worthy Communicating ſumm'd up.

HAVING hitherto ſhewn wherein the *Worthineſs of Receiving* lies, and what thoſe Qualifications are which fit us for this holy Feaſt: I ſhall now only note ſome Things, that *may ſilence all good Mens Complaints about the Hardſhip thereof*, and *ſhew plainly who they are that are unworthy to join in it*, and ſo conclude this Point.

1ſt, I ſhall note ſome Things that *may reconcile all good Minds to this Feaſt*, and *ſilence the Complaints of the Hardſhip and extraordinary Difficulty of coming worthily to partake in it.* And this had need to be done, and may prove of great Uſe when once it is done; becauſe one *chief* Thing, which cauſes even *good People* to come ſo *ſeldom*, is the *apprehended Difficulty* and *extraordinary Solemnity* of the *worthy Receiving.*

Now to ſatisfy all good Souls in this Point, and to remove theſe hard Thoughts of it, I would ſuggeſt to them theſe *three* Things:

1ſt, That *all theſe Tempers, which are required to a worthy Communion, are neceſſary Parts of Duty, and of a good Man; ſo that no more is required of us to fit ourſelves for receiving the Holy Sacrament, than is required to fit us to die, or to go to Heaven.*

They are *all neceſſary Parts of Duty, and of a good Man.* It is neceſſarily required of every good Man, who would ſerve God and be accepted with him, that he [a] *honour his Lord* and Maſter *Jeſus Chriſt*, and be careful to [b] *obey* him; that he be [c] *affectionately ſenſible* of *all the Kindneſſes* which he has done, particularly in *dying* for him, and moſt heartily [d] *thank* him for the ſame; that he be [e] *humbled* under the Senſe of his own Sins, and utterly [f] *abhor* them; and *reſign up himſelf* both [g] Soul and Body, to his Saviour's Uſe, who has bought and made a Purchaſe of him with his own Heart's Blood; that, having [h] *firſt believed in Chriſt*, he *ſincerely conſent to the Terms of the New Covenant*, and enter into it, *performing* and *promiſing* that [i] *Repentance*, [k] *good Endeavours*, and [l] *Obedience* which are required by it, in Expectation of that *Forgiveneſs*, *Grace*, and *eternal Happineſs* which are propoſed therein; and laſtly, that he ſhould [m] lay aſide all *Envy* and *malicious Thoughts* and [n] *forgive Injuries*, [o] *repair Wrongs*, be at [p] *Peace*, and live in [q] *Charity* with all the World. All theſe are Duties indiſpenſably required by the *Goſpel of Chriſt*, as appears by the Places referred to *below*; they are no indifferent Things, but are abſolutely neceſſary in every *Chriſtian*, who would ſecure his Peace with God, and be ſure at laſt to go to Heaven. And they, as we have ſeen, are the very Things, which the Worthineſs of communicating conſiſts of. So that to be *perſonally worthy* for the Communion, is *nothing more* than to be an accep-

[a] Phil. ii. 9, 10. [b] Luc. vi. 46. [c] Jam. i. 12.
[d] Eph. v. 20. [e] Matt. v. 3. [f] Prov. viii. 13.
[g] 1 Cor vi. 19, 20. [h] Mar. xvi. 16. [i] Luk. xiii. 3.
[k] Phil. ii. 12. [l] Heb. v. 9. [m] Gal. v. 20, 21.
[n] Matt. vi. 15. [o] Ezek. xxxiii. 14, 15. [p] Rom. xii. 18.
[q] Col. iii. 14.

tably

tably *good and religious Man:* To have all those Virtues which constitute a *Saint*, and are necessary Parts of that Obedience and holy Living, which must get us all an *Interest in Christ*, and secure our *Title* to eternal Salvation. And therefore if any Man is contented with those Duties, which God exacts of him to make him a good Man; he has no Cause to complain of those, which are necessary to a worthy receiving. And if he doth repine at them, and refrain from the Lord's Table, because he will not be at the Pains to acquire them; it is plain, that it is not the *Hardship of the Sacrament*, but of an *Holy Life*, that he is disturbed at; and the same Difficulties which drive him from the *Communion*, if he understand himself, must drive him also out of his *Religion*, and the *Way to Heaven.*

2*dly*, *These Duties*, which are required to a *worthy Receiving*, are required also to *every worthy Prayer*, *Vow*, and *Thanksgiving*; so that *no more Duties are required to our Worthiness in this holy Feast*, *than to our Worthiness in all other Acts of Religion.* For unless a Man *repents of all his Sins*, and is *in Love and Charity with all his Neighbours*, and *believes in Christ and all his Promises*, and is *ready and resolved to obey all his Commandments*; and, in one Word, unless he is a *good Man*, which fits him for a worthy receiving; he is not more worthy to *say his Prayers*, to *give Thanks*, to *make Vows* to God, or *seal Covenants* with him, than he is to join in the Holy Communion.

He is not more worthy to *say his Prayers*; for to the Acceptance of them all the same Things are required of him. *If I regard Iniquity in my Heart*, says the Psalmist, *i. e.* if I do not *repent* of it, and turn away from it, *the Lord will not hear me*, *Psal.* lxvi. 18. And if *Men* would *pray* as

they ought, says St. *Paul*, and as they may hope to be heard, they must have both *Faith*, *Peace*, and *Innocence* to recommend their Petitions, or *lift up holy Hands without Wrath and Doubting*, 1 Tim. ii. 8. *If you forgive not Men their Trespasses*, says our Saviour, *neither will your Heavenly Father forgive you your Trespasses*. So that *when ye pray*, say *Forgive us our Debts we forgive our Debtors*, Mat. vi. 12, 15. God says the same of an *ill Man's Prayer*, that he doth of an *ill Man's Communicating*, namely, that he is most *unworthily* in *both*, and shall receive a *Curse* instead of a *Blessing*. For as the *Unworthy*, *i. e.* as has been shewn, the *wicked Receiver* (the Worthiness required being only that of a good Man) *eats and drinks his own Damnation*, 1 Cor. xi. 29. so it is said of the *Unworthy*, *i. e.* of the *wicked Petitioner* too, that *he who turns away his Ear from hearing the Law*, even *his Prayer shall be an Abomination*, Prov. xxviii. 9. and xv. 8.

Thus is every Man, who is *unworthy to receive the blessed Sacrament*, *unworthy* also to *pray to God*, the same Thing being required to both: An *impenitent ill Man* being utterly unfit for *both*, but a truly *penitent good Man*, being such as he accounts *worthy*, and most affectionately invites to them.

Nay, he is not only unworthy to *pray to God*, but also, whilst that *Impenitence* lasts, to *give him Thanks*, to *make Vows*, to *covenant with him*, or to have an Intercourse and Communication with his Divine Majesty in any *other* Actions of *Religion*. If he tells God that he is *thankful* for his Mercies, whilst in the constant Course of his Life he disobeys him; his Actions plainly give the Lye to his Words, and proclaim him a most *ungrateful* Person. If he *makes him Vows* and *Promises*, and *covenants to repent of all his Sins*, whilst he still *lives impenitent*, and goes on in them; he only speaks

ſpeaks him fair, intending no ſuch Thing, and therefore doth nothing elſe but *abuſe* and *provoke* him. He doth nothing that honours God as it ſhould, ſo long as he is an ungodly Man, nor muſt hope in any Services or Religious Performances, to be own'd and accepted by him. For God will have nothing to do with ill Men in any Way, whilſt they continue impenitent in their Sins; Chriſt has purchaſed no Reconciliation for ſuch, nor will he, till they change that Courſe, have any Friendſhip for them, or take any Complacence in them. He will hear the Prayers, and accept the Thanks, and truſt the Promiſes and Engagements of thoſe only, who are fully reſolved to amend their Lives, and become good Men: So that if any Man perſiſts impenitent, which unfits him for Receiving, he is alſo unfit for every Thing elſe, and unworthy to perform any other Actions of Religion.

As for this Buſineſs of *worthy Communicating* then, there is no more Cauſe of Complaint againſt *it*, for the *Difficulty* and *Hardſhip* thereof, than there is againſt *all Religion*. The ſame Duties which are required to a worthy Receiving, are no leſs required to make any of us a good Man; to confer a Right to Heaven, to a worthy Prayer, Promiſe, or Thankſgiving. So that if any Man will not come to the Sacrament, becauſe he is wicked, and will not be at the Pains to attain thoſe Virtues which are neceſſary to a worthy Communion: If he underſtands himſelf, he muſt for the ſame Reaſon keep back from Prayers, and Praiſes, and all Pretences to Religion. For unleſs he will labour after theſe Duties, and perform them, he is unmeet to come to God, and is very unworthy in all of them. And therefore ſo long as he is *unfit for the Holy Sacrament*, he is *unfit for every Thing elſe*, and if he reſolves to continue ſo, may as well reſolve

reſolve to renounce his *Baptiſm*, and the whole *Chriſtian Profeſſion.*

And as theſe Tempers, which are required to a worthy Communion, are no more than is required in every good Man, in every worthy Prayer, Praiſe, or other Act of Religion: So it is to be obſerved,

3dly, That *however they may be commended, yet are they not neceſſarily required, as ſome have imagined, in more intenſe and tranſporting Degrees in it, than they are in other Inſtances of Devotion.*

That which has deterred good People from the bleſſed Sacrament, more than any Thing beſides, is *their too aweful Senſe and Veneration thereof*, and *placing it at too great a Diſtance from other Parts of Worſhip.* They think no Virtues are worthy of it, but what are expreſſed in *Extacy* and *Tranſport*; and that when it requires the ſame Duties with other Parts of God's Service, it requires them in *much greater Perfection*, and *far higher Meaſures.* So that they imagine they may be worthy to pray and praiſe God, tho' they are unworthy to communicate: And therefore they join in *them* ordinarily as there is Occaſion for them, when, through the Exceſs of Reverence, they ſcarce ever join in *this* at all.

But this is a great Miſtake, which, tho' it be well meant, has a very ill Effect, and affrights good Souls from performing this Duty and Service, and paying this Honour to their Saviour, when they have no Cauſe to be afraid of it. For altho' it be *commendable* and *deſirable*, when it can be had; yet it is not *abſolutely neceſſary* that ſo it ſhould be.

It is *very commendable*, I ſay, *and much to be deſired, that we ſhould exerciſe theſe Tempers in a higher Degree in this Holy Sacrament, than in other Parts of Worſhip.* It will be very well if our Prayers are more

more *fervent*, and our *Praiſes* more *affectionate*, and if *all the Virtues* which we have Place to exerciſe, are more *full* and *flagrant then*, than at *other* Times. For there we have *Chriſt's Death* repreſented, with the *Heinouſneſs of our Sins* which cauſed it, and the *ineſtimable Benefits* that come by it; and we meet on Purpoſe, to fix our Thoughts and Contemplation on it. And that is the Conſideration, which gives greateſt Force, and adds moſt Strength to all our Duties; ſo that when we come for that very Intent, it very well becomes us for the Honour thereof to excel in them. And upon this Account it will be very commendable, and much to be deſired, that we ſhould be more vigorous in all our Virtues at *this*, than at any *other* Ordinance.

But altho' this be *commendable*, and *much to be deſired in us*; yet it is not *neceſſary*, or *indiſpenſably required of us*, *but that we may communicate worthily when it is otherwiſe*. For we have theſe Tempers in *ſuch a Degree*, as is *neceſſary to our eternal Happineſs*, we have ſo much of them, as will render us worthy and welcome Gueſts at *this*, as well as at every *other* Ordinance of *Chriſt*.

And this is plain from hence, becauſe when we have them in a *ſaving Degree*, which would procure our Acceptance in other Parts of God's Service, they fit us for the Communion of *Chriſt*, and of *glorified Saints in Heaven*; and ſo cannot leave us unworthy to communicate with *him*, and *them* here on *Earth*. If we *ſavingly repent us of all our Sins*, and are *ſavingly thankful for all Chriſt's Mercies*, and are *ſavingly in Charity with all our Neighbours*, and have a *ſaving Faith in Chriſt's Promiſes*; whether theſe Virtues be at the Pitch of the *Strong*, or only of the *Weak in Faith*, we are accepted with him, ſince he accepts both. And when once he accepts

accepts us, we may approach to him in any Place; when he allows of the Measure of our Graces, we may be welcome to shew them forth, and offer a Sacrifice of a sweet Smell, when we send them up to him in *any*, or in *all* the Parts of his Worship and Service.

Let a Man come then to the Holy Communion, tho' it be without any Thing of *extraordinary* and unwonted Transports, and only in that *ordinary* Exercise of these Virtues, which gains him Acceptance in *Prayer*, or *Praise*, or *other religious Actions*; and then let him not doubt, but that, altho' more were better, yet is this good, and will render him a worthy Partaker of the Lord's Supper.

And this, as we have great Cause to believe, the *ancient* Christians thought, because they made it not an *extraordinary separate Thing*, as we do now, but an *ordinary* and *constant Part of the Christian Worship*. It went usually along with the other Parts of the Service, and they who came to *Prayers*, came also to the *Blessed Sacrament*; the *same Preparations*, and the *same Persons* being admitted to both. That, in the *Apostles* Times, they met to *communicate*, as they met to pray, *every Day*; and *breaking Bread*, was no less constant a Part, than *Prayer*, and *Praise*, of their *Communion*. and *Fellowship*. All the *Disciples* at *Jerusalem*, says St. *Luke*, *continued stedfastly in the Apostles Doctrine and Fellowship, and in breaking of Bread, and in Prayers*, Acts ii. 42. And again, *they continuing daily with one Accord in the Temple, and breaking Bread from House to House, did eat their Meat with Gladness, and Singleness of Heart, praising God*, v. 46, 47. And afterwards, when their Members increased, and *stated Days* were appointed for the publick Service of God; on the *first Day of the Week*, when they met for other Worship, the Communion always went

went along therewith. Thus it is plain it was in the *Apoſtles* Days, for then the *Sunday Worſhip* was expreſſed by *breaking Bread*; which ſhews, that it was an *ordinary* and *conſtant Part thereof. On the firſt Day of the Week*, ſays St. *Luke*, *when the Diſciples came together to break Bread*, Acts xx. 7. And thus alſo it continued for a good while afterwards, as is evident from the ninth Canon of the *Apoſtles*. And to ſhew how fit they eſteemed *all the Faithful*, whether *weak* or *ſtrong in Faith*, who were worthy to join in other Parts of Worſhip, to join alſo in this; that *Apoſtolical Canon* requires all the *Faithful*, who come to the other Service, to ſtay the Communion, and to join in that alſo. * *All the Faithful, that come to Church and hear the Scriptures, but ſtay not to join in the Holy Communion and the Prayers for that Service, ought to be ſeparated and ſhut out from the Lord's Table, as they that bring Confuſion into the Church.* And the like is alſo injoined in the *Council of* Antioch. † *All that come to Church*, ſay they, *and hear the Scriptures, but do not communicate in the People's Prayers, but turn away diſorderly from the Euchariſt, ſhall be excommunicated and expelled the Church, and not received again, till they confeſs their Fault, and ſhew Repentance for it.*

And thus we ſee, however *commendable* it may be, that People ſhould come to this Holy Sacrament, with more intenſe Acts, and higher Preparation, than would ſerve to any other Parts of

* Πάντας τοὺς εἰσιόντας πιστοὺς, καὶ μάλιστα γεραφῶν ἀκούοντας, μὴ παραμένοντας δὲ τῇ προσευχῇ, καὶ τῇ ἁγίᾳ μεταλήψει, ὡς ἀταξίας ἐμποιοῦντας τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, ἀφορίζεσθαι χρή. Canon. 9. Can. Apoſtol.

† Πάντας τοὺς εἰσιόντας εἰς τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, καὶ μάλιστα ἱερῶν γεραφῶν ἀκούοντας, μὴ κοινωνοῦντας δὲ εὐχῆς ἅμα τῷ λαῷ, ἢ ἀποστρεφομένους τὴν ἁγίαν μετάληψιν τῆς εὐχαριστίας, καὶ τινα ἀταξίαν τοιοῦτοι ἀποβλέποντας γίνεσθαι τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ, ἕως ἂν ἐξομολογησάμενοι καὶ δείξαντες καρποὺς μετανοίας. Concil. Antioch. Can. 9.

Worſhip; yet that it is not *neceſſary* they ſhould do ſo. They may be welcome and worthy Partakers in this Ordinance, who are worthy to partake in others; ſo that they are fit for it, who are fit for any other religious Service; the *ſame Virtues*, and the *ſame Degrees* may ſuffice thereto. For they fit them to communicate *with Chriſt* and with *glorified Saints in Heaven*, and ſo muſt needs fit them to communicate with *him*, and *them* here *on Earth*. They fitted Chriſtians for it in the *Apoſtles Times*, when the *Euchariſt* was no *extraordinary* and *ſeparate*, but an *ordinary conſtant Part* of the *Chriſtian Worſhip*. For then, not only they whoſe Virtues were moſt *high* and *perfect*, but *all the Faithful* were called upon to communicate; and they who were judged fit to meet at the Prayers and other Services, were thought worthy to meet at the Lord's Table too. And ſince they fitted *them* for it, in thoſe Days, it cannot be thought, but that they muſt needs fit us for the ſame in ours alſo.

As for thoſe then, who have been wont to think more hardly of the Holy Sacrament than of other Parts of Worſhip, and how frequent ſoever they were in them, to come but ſeldom unto it, by Reaſon of the apprehended Difficulty in a worthy Partaking thereof: If they duly conſider theſe *three* Things they will ſee cauſe to change their Mind, and forbear to complain any more againſt it. For *the Virtues which are required of us in a worthy Communion, are all neceſſary Parts of Duty, and of a good Man*; and *are as much required to a worthy Prayer, Vow, Thankſgiving, and every other Act of Religion*; and *are not neceſſarily required in more intenſe and tranſporting Degrees in it, than they are in other Inſtances of Devotion.* So that no good Man has any Cauſe at all to repine at it, or abſtain from it. It lies hard upon, and can be blamed

blamed by none, but thoſe, who for the ſame Reaſon, muſt blame every other Ordinance and Part of divine Service, which requires as much of a worthy Worſhipper as this doth; and who, at the ſame Rate as they caſt off it, muſt renounce their Chriſtianity, and throw aſide all Religion too.

And thus having noted ſome Things, which may help to reconcile all good Minds to this Bleſſed Sacrament, and ſilence the Complaints of Hardſhip in a worthy Receiving of the ſame: I ſhall proceed now,

2*dly*, To *ſhew plainly who are unworthy of it*, and *what they muſt do to fit and prepare themſelves for it*, and ſo conclude *this Point.*

Now theſe, in one Word, are *all that are impenitent, or that have committed any wilful or damning Sin, and are not fully ſet againſt it and purpoſed to amend it.* For all the Virtues of worthy Receiving, as we have ſeen, are neceſſary Parts of Duty, and of a good Man; ſo that if any Perſon would *repent* of all his Breaches of thoſe Duties, and take Care thenceforward to endow his Soul with them, he would be worthy to be entertained at this Feaſt, and fit to be bidden welcome. Beſides, if *Repentance* and *forſaking all his Sins* will go down with him, there is no Man who pretends to Religion, but may perform every Thing elſe which is required to this Communion. For there would be no great Difficulty in *paying Chriſt Honour* and *Reverence*, and *following him with Love* and *Thankfulneſs*, and *reſigning ourſelves to his Uſe*, and *abhorring of our Sins*, if *Repentance* and *Reformation* were not annexed to them. Men could *love Chriſt heartily*, and *thank him freely*, and *honour him abundantly*, and *reſign themſelves up to him wholly*, and *believe in him chearfully*, if he would not peremptorily require them to *amend their Ways*, and *forſake their Sins*,

Sins, which are the Things they place their chiefeſt Pleaſure and Delight in. So that if any Man will not fit himſelf for receiving, it is not for the Difficulty of other Duties, as if he could not brook them; but only for the Difficulty of Repentance, ſo that *Impenitence* is truly at the Bottom. He will not *ſatisfy thoſe who have ſuffered by him*, or *forgive thoſe who have injured him*, or be at *Peace* and live in *Charity with all Men*, or *renounce that Injuſtice*, *Laſciviouſneſs*, *Drunkenneſs*, or *other known Sin*, which, in confirming the *New Covenant*, he muſt *promiſe God that he will depart from.* It is becauſe his Heart ſticks to ſome of *theſe*, or ſome *other* ſuch like Tranſgreſſions, and will not go off from them, that he is an unfit and unworthy Man; whereas, were it not for this, he could do all Things elſe which are required of him.

He therefore, who is unworthy to communicate, and unfit to receive the Holy Sacrament, is plainly one who is *impenitent*; who is guilty of ſome damning Sin, and is not reſolved yet to leave it, but intends ſtill to continue in the ſame. He is either a *careleſs Man*, that lives at large in a conſtant Courſe of *Senſuality* and *Worldlineſs*, being wholly given to *heap up Wealth*, or *aim at Honour*, or *follow Pleaſure*, *without Conviction*, or making any Pretence at all to ſerious Religion; or, if he ſeems to look towards God, and is careful in *many* Things to pleaſe him; yet he ſerves him not in *all* Points as he ought, but allows himſelf in *ſome known Sin*, continuing unreclaimed in *common Swearing*, *Drunkenneſs*, *Uncleanneſs*, *Malice*, *Contentiouſneſs*, *Fraud*, *Oppreſſion*, *Slander*, *Cenſoriouſneſs*, *evil Speaking*, or ſome other damning Crime, which he will not be at the Pains to leave for Chriſt's Sake, or for any Thing that he either *has* done, or *would do* for him.

Now

Now if any one of thoſe, who read this Treatiſe, are ſuch as theſe, and I put the Matter to their *own Conſciences*; I confeſs they are not worthy to come to the Holy Sacrament, till they turn away from ſuch known Sin, and repent of the ſame; and would ſin againſt this Holy Feaſt and their own Souls, if they ſhould partake therein before they have done ſo. But then I muſt tell them withal, that as they are not fit to come to this holy Ordinance; ſo, whilſt they continue in that Eſtate, neither are they fit to come to any other, or to any Thing elſe that looks towards God, and their own eternal Happineſs. For ſo long as they thus eſpouſe *any Number* of Sins, or *any one Sin* againſt God, and daily repeat it when they have a Temptation to it, notwithſtanding their own Hearts are ſenſible that he has forbid it, or at leaſt would have been ſenſible thereof, unleſs they had been wilfully blinded, or by long Uſe hardened therein: So long, I ſay, as they are thus *impenitent in any known Sin*, they are not only *unfit to come to the Holy Communion*, but are alſo as *unfit to die*, or *to go to Heaven*, *to pray to God*, *to utter Praiſes*, *to make Vows to him*, or *to join in any other Actions of Religion*. For an *impenitent* Man, whilſt he continues ſuch, is God's *profeſſed Enemy*, and is welcome to him at no Time but when he *repents*; ſo that till that is done, he is acceptable in no Service which he pays him

This then is the Danger of their State, who lie impenitent in *many*, or in *few* known Sins: They are unworthy indeed to receive the Holy Communion, but they are equally unworthy to join in Prayers, to give Thanks, or make Vows, or die in Peace, or hope for Happineſs, or

do any Thing elſe that ſhews them to be Chriſtians.

And if any Man's Conſcience tells him, that this is *his State*; his Way is not to think there is no Harm, if he doth but *abſtain from the Communion*; for, as I ſay, he is as unworthy in his Prayers and Praiſes, and in every Thing elſe that belongs to Religion; but *forthwith to repent*, and *amend that Tranſgreſſion*, which ſhuts him out from the Holy Sacrament, and from every Thing elſe that looks towards Heaven, that ſo he may be worthy, and find Acceptance both in *it*, and in *them* too. This Repentance will reſtore him to the Favour of God, and gain him Acceptance with him; and then he is fit for this, and for every other Part of God's Worſhip and Service, and may worthily join in any of them.

And by this it appears who is unworthy of this Feaſt, and what he muſt do to fit and prepare himſelf for it. Every Man who is impenitent, is an unworthy Communicant; but if he will ſeriouſly repent, and amend his Ways, he will find no Difficulty in any other Duties which make up a Believer's Worthineſs, but may then be a worthy and welcome Gueſt whenſoever he has a Mind to come to the Lord's Table.

And thus I have done with the *ſecond* Thing which I propoſed, namely, to ſhew *wherein the Worthineſs of eating and drinking at this Feaſt lies*; which I have ſtayed the longer upon, becauſe both the *irreverent Approach* of ſome Men to it, and the *ſcrupulous abſtaining* of others from it, do both take Riſe from this Head, ſo that it well deſerves to be carefully explained and clearly ſtated.

And thus, having endeavoured to give ſome Help to all thoſe who deſire *to communicate worthily*,

thily, by ſhewing *what is the Meaning of eating Bread and drinking Wine in the Bleſſed Sacrament*, and *wherein the Worthineſs of doing it lies*: I ſhall proceed now in the third Place, *to exhort and preſs Men unto it*, by ſhewing them *how much it is every good Chriſtian's Duty to frequent the ſame*, and *how great the Benefits are that come thereby*, *which ſhould make them ſeek it of themſelves*, *though they were not commanded ſo to do*; of which in the next Part.

PART II.

CHAP. I.

Of the Duty of Communicating.

The CONTENTS.

To communicate, is a Duty incumbent on us, as appears, 1. *From the obliging Import of the Command about it. This Command of Christ shewn, and several Notes added, which greatly recommend and inforce it,* viz. *It is such an Instance, as best shews our peculiar Reverence and Love to him. The whole Yoke of* Jewish *Ceremonies is taken away, and only it, and Baptism, two cheap and easy Rites, are imposed instead of them. It was his last Command, he gave it the Night before he suffered: In St.* Paul's *Commission to preach the Gospel, it was particularly specified. We cannot neglect it, without greatest Danger to ourselves, as appears from our Saviour's Words,* John vi. 53. *which are shewn to speak of it; and from the Danger of neglecting the* Jewish *Passover, which answered to it.* 2. *From the obliging Nature of those Things which are meant by it,* viz. *because we therein publickly own Christ and his Religion, and solemnly remember him, and confirm the New Covenant with God, and a League of Friendship with our Brethren, and are vouchsafed the highest Honour,*

Honour, and receive Tokens of greateſt Love, and Enjoyment of preſent Graces, and Pledges of future Glory from him: All which no good Man ought, and no ingenuous Man will decline, when he is called to them. This Duty obliges thoſe only who are of Age for it; and them too only at ſuch Times as they have an Opportunity and a fit Occaſion offered. An Objection againſt its being a Duty, from 1 Cor. xi. 25. *anſwered. The Neglect of it is a great Sin. This God may excuſe in thoſe good Souls, who thro' Ignorance or Error are held back, and becauſe of their over-high Veneration for it, think themſelves unworthy to come to it, whilſt in the Honeſty of their Hearts they thus miſtake it. But he will not excuſe it in them, when they are better inform'd; and much leſs in others, who neglected it becauſe they are careleſs of it, or too wicked and impenitent to receive it.*

THE worthy receiving the Holy Sacrament, which I have hitherto deſcribed, is no *indifferent Thing*, which may either be *done*, or *let alone*, according to Diſcretion; but an *indiſpenſable Duty*, wherein God has ſtraitly bound, and which he has peremptorily required of every *grown Chriſtian.*

And this will appear theſe *two* Ways.

1*ſt*, From the *Expreſſiveneſs and obliging Import of the Command about it.*

2*dly*, From the *obliging Nature of thoſe Things which are meant by it.*

1*ſt*, That every Chriſtian ought to frequent the Holy Sacrament, and come to it as often as he is called, and an Opportunity is offered for the ſame, appears from the *Expreſſiveneſs and obliging Import of*

the Command about it. For our bleſſed *Lord* has given us his *Command* for it, and that with ſuch *particular Notes* and *Circumſtances*, as ſhew that he lays a great Weight upon it, which muſt needs oblige all, who have any juſt Regard for him, to frequent it.

He has given us, I ſay, *his expreſs Command for it.* For thus St. *Paul* tells us, *he did*, when he ordained this *Feaſt. He took Bread*, ſays he, *and when he had given Thanks, he brake it, and ſaid, Take, eat, This is my Body which is broken for you; This DO in Remembrance of me.* And *after the ſame Manner he took the Cup, ſaying, This Cup is the New Teſtament in my Blood; This DO ye, as often as you drink it, in Remembrance of me*, 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25. And if we had nothing more than this plain Command for it, it were enough to make every Man, who would pleaſe God, and go to Heaven, to come thereto when he is invited. For *then ye are my Friends*, ſays Chriſt, when *ye do whatſoever I command you*, John xv. 14. And *he that ſhall break the leaſt of my Commandments, and ſhall teach Men ſo, ſhall be leaſt in in the Kingdom of Heaven*, i. e. he ſhall not enter, or have any Share at all there, *Mat.* v. 19.

But beſides this *expreſs Command* which he has given for it, we have *other Notes* and *Circumſtances* added, which greatly recommend the ſame, and ſhew that he lays a particular Weight upon it. For,

1*ſt*, It is a Thing which is *to be done purely upon his Account, having no other Reaſon but his Command to bind and inforce it*; ſo that if we have any *Love* and *Reverence for him*, this is the *beſt Way* to ſhew the ſame. As for the Duties of *Humility, Temperance, Juſtice, Faithfulneſs, Gratitude, Charity, Peace, Prayers to God*, and the like:

Though

Though Chriſt has told us of them, and has expreſly *injoin'd them*, as well as *this*, yet is not he alone in that, but they were ſufficiently proclaimed before he came, to the *Jews*, by *Moſes* and the *Prophets*, and to the *Gentile World*, *by natural Conſcience.* In declaring *them*, he had an open way made for him, and the Conſciences of all Men were ready to ſtrike in with him, which, among all good Minds, would much facilitate their Reception. But in *this* Command, he ſtands alone; for *natural Reaſon* knows nothing of it, nor will the Conſcience of any Man, but a *Chriſtian*, oblige him to it. So that here we have no Light but his Word, no Motive but our Obedience to him to perſuade it; and therefore if we do it at all, it muſt be purely for his Sake, without any other Inducement.

And this is a ſtrong Bond upon all who *love their Lord*, and have any *Peculiarity of Reſpect for him*, to obſerve it. It is the true Cauſe and Reaſon, indeed, why ſome neglect it, who preſume to ſhew this Neglect thereof, and perſiſt ſecurely in the ſame, becauſe their own Conſcience doth not ſtartle at it, and check them ſo ſeverely for abſenting from this Feaſt, as it doth for Drunkenneſs, Whoredom, Lies, Cheating, *&c.* which have not only *Chriſt's Laws*, but *natural Reaſon* alſo to exclaim againſt them. And if Men have no Love for their Lord, no peculiar Regard for any things becauſe he has injoin'd them, or are not duly inform'd of his Command about them, thus it will be. But if any who ſee that he has made it their Duty to frequent this Holy Table, have any peculiar Love and Regard to him; they will greedily embrace this as the beſt Opportunity of ſhewing their Affection to his Service, ſince therein they can be ſway'd by nothing elſe, and

will moſt readily communicate, when he calls them ſo to do.

2*dly*, *It and Baptiſm*, thoſe two *cheap* and *eaſy* Things, *are the only poſitive Commands which our Saviour Chriſt has laid upon us, when he took off the heavy Yoke of the numerous, expenſive and laborious* Jewiſh *Precepts*; ſo that out of *natural Equity*, and to ſhew our *Thankfulneſs for ſuch a gainful Exchange*, we ought moſt readily to obſerve them.

The *Jews* were loaded with a *Number* of *troubleſome* and *expenſive Rites*, which had no Goodneſs diſcernable in themſelves, nor any thing but the Revelation made by *Moſes*, to recommend them to their *Conſciences:* Such as the * *forbearing Swines*, and *ſeveral other ſorts of Fleſh*; the *waſhing of their Bodies upon their* † *touching of any dead Perſons*; and upon any *corporal Uncleanneſſes*; the ‡ *bringing Offerings* and *Sacrifice of fed Beaſts, for a Return of Thanks*, and for *Propitiation upon any Offences*; and many other cumberſome and coſtly Rites, which the Apoſtle calls *the Law of carnal Commandments*, Heb. vii. 16. and ix. 10. and *weak and beggarly Elements*, Gal. iv. 9. which were given in way of Command to them, not becauſe the Things deſerv'd it, but only that they might be kept employ'd, as uſeleſs Exerciſes are to Children, to hinder them from more hurtful Work; and ſo were ſuited only to the *Infancy*, and *Non-age of the World*, Gal. iv. 3.

But from all this *Burden of Ceremonies*, *under* which, as St. *Peter* ſays, *they*, and *their Fathers groaned*, and *were oppreſſed*, *Acts* xv. 10. by the coming of *Chriſt*, we are moſt graciouſly delivered. For *he has aboliſhed in his Fleſh*, i. e. by his Death, wherein he gave his Body for us, *the Law*

* Levit. xi. 7. † Numb. xix. 13. ‡ Levit. xv.

of

of Commandments contain'd in Ordinances, Eph. ii. 15. He has *blotted out the Hand-writing of Ordinances that was againſt us, which was contrary to us* (hedging in the Church within the *Jews*, and excluding all us *Gentiles*) *and took it out of the way, nailing it to his Croſs*, Col. ii. 14. All this Law of *Jewiſh Ceremonies* he has abrogated, and procured us a complete Liberty and Exemption from the ſame, injoining us only theſe *two cheap* and *eaſy Rites* of *Baptiſm* and the *Lord's Supper*, inſtead of it. And if any Man has but *common Ingenuity*, and will return *equitably* for what is done; and much more, if he has any *grateful Reſentments* for ſo valuable an Exemption, he muſt needs ſubmit with all Thankfulneſs to this gainful Exchange and Impoſition, and run to it with as much Forwardneſs, as any Man would to pay *twelve Pence* in full Diſcharge of *twenty Pounds*.

3*dly*, This Commandment about the Holy Sacrament, was his *dying and laſt Command, he gave it the very Night before he ſuffered. The ſame Night*, ſays St. *Paul*, *in which he was betray'd, he took Bread*, and ſaid, *Take, eat, This do in remembrance of me*, 2 Cor. xi. 23, 24. And this, had it come only in the Nature of a *Requeſt*, and not with the *Authority of a Command*, muſt needs have made it of greateſt Power with us. For it is great *Inhumanity*, and ſhews an *hard Heart*, to deny the *laſt Suit* of a *dying* Perſon, though he were a *Stranger* to us; and *baſe Ingratitude*, and a *Falſification of all Friendſhip*, to throw back the *laſt Requeſt of a dying Friend*, eſpecially, if he is *beforehand* with us, and has done much more than his Requeſt comes to for our Sakes; and the *greateſt Aggravation of all Diſobedience*, to ſlight the *laſt Will* and *Words* of our *Fathers*, or *Maſters*, or others who have Right over us, and Power to command

command us. And therefore since our *Blessed Lord*, who came upon Earth for no other End, but to do us Service, yea even to lay down his Life for our Sakes, after all the Pains and Cost which he has been at for us, has left this as his *last Will*, and both *intreated* and *injoined* at parting, that we should eat and drink in Remembrance of him: If we have *any Shame* we *cannot*, and if we *profess any Duty*, we *dare not*, and if we have *any Love for him*, we *will not* neglect it; but come to it out of Mindfulness of our *gone Friend* and *departed Lord*, as oft as we shall have Opportunity so to do.

4thly, It was thought by Christ to be a Commandment so *material*, that *when St.* Paul *receiv'd his Commission to preach the Gospel, it was by Name inserted, and particularly specified*; and this *special Designation* of it, shews that he was more than *ordinarily* concerned for it. *I have received of the Lord*, says he, or by his Revelation, when I was call'd by him, *that which I also delivered unto you*, as from him, namely, *that the same Night he was betrayed, he took Bread*, and said, *Take, eat, this is my Body which is broken for you, this do in Remembrance of me*, 1 Cor. xi. 23, 24.

5thly, It is a *Command*, which, as the *Scripture* plainly intimates, *without great Danger to ourselves, cannot either be unworthily kept or neglected.*

Without very *great* and *apparent Danger to ourselves*, we cannot *come unworthily to the Holy Sacrament. For he that eats and drinks unworthily*, says St. *Paul, eats and drinks Damnation to himself*, 1 Cor. xi. 29.

And *without a like Danger, we cannot neglect, or keep back from it. Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man*, says our Saviour, *and drink his Blood, ye have no Life in you*, John vi. 53. This the *ancient*

tient Church, as is well known, underſtood generally of *eating his Fleſh in the Holy Sacrament*; which is the great Reaſon they give for that Practice, ſo common among them, namely, why *Infants are to partake of it.* And of this, there is great Cauſe to underſtand this Place. For it is hard to think of any thing that can ſupport ſuch *full Expreſſions*, *as eating of his Body*, and *drinking of his Blood*, beſides *eating Bread*, and *drinking Wine in the Holy Sacrament*, which he calls *his Body* and *his Blood*, when he inſtitutes it, *Mat.* xxvi. 26, 27, 28. And beſides, in this very Place he directs us to his *Body crucified*, and *given for the Life of the World*; to ſhew that the eating relates to it, as it is *ſo repreſented*, which is no where done but in the *Holy Euchariſt. I am the living Bread*, ſays he, which *whoſo eats ſhall live for ever: and the Bread which I will give*, i. e. to be eaten, *is* my Body crucified, which under that Notion is repreſented only in the Holy Sacrament, or *my Fleſh which I will give for the Life of the World.* And *except ye* thus *eat the Fleſh*, *and drink the Blood of the Son of Man*, *ye have no Life in you*, John vi. 51, 52, 53.

This Diſcourſe, indeed, of *eating his Fleſh in the Bleſſed Sacrament*, was before the Sacrament itſelf was *inſtituted.* But ſo was his Diſcourſe of *Baptiſm* to *Nicodemus*, before *Baptiſm* was appointed for the *ſtanding Rite*, whereby all Mankind ſhould be *chriſtened*, John iii. 5. And ſo was his Diſcourſe to the People, of *the Death he ſhould die*, by being *lifted up*, before he was *crucified*, John xii. 32, 33. And ſo was his Diſcourſe of *raiſing up the Temple of his Body after it ſhould be deſtroyed*, before he *was raiſed from the dead*, John ii. 19, 21. And ſo in *this very Place*, was his Diſcourſe of *giving his Fleſh for the Life of the World*, which

which they understood not before he *suffered*, more than they did this *Sacramental Eating* of his Flesh before the *Sacrament* was *appointed*, John vi. 51. Our Saviour spake several things by *Anticipation* in *sundry* Places, as, from this *last* Instance, it is plain he did in *this*; which though his Hearers did not at that time fully understand, yet they would afterwards. So that when other Reasons evince him to have spoke in this Place, of the Sacramental Eating of his Body and Blood; the Sacrament's not being yet instituted, is no good Proof or Argument against it.

Thus, is this Necessity of *eating his Flesh, and drinking his Blood*, as ever we would *hope for eternal Life thereby*, spoken of the *Lord's Supper*, wherein we feast upon them. And we need not wonder, that it should be spoken thereof: For it is no more than is expresly spoke of *Baptism*, which is but of *equal Rank with it*, both being *alike Duties*, and *equally required*. For of that it is said, *He that believes, and is baptized, shall be saved*, Mark xvi. 16. And *except a Man be born again of Water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*, John iii. 5.

But besides this Proof of the *Danger of neglecting the Holy Sacrament*, because our Lord tells us *we have no Life in us without it*; it may also appear from the *Danger of neglecting the* Jewish *Passover*, which *answer'd to it*, and was the same to *them*, as this Feast is to *us*, wherein * *Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.* And as for the Danger of neglecting that, it was great indeed, no less than of being *cut off from* Israel, which was the Punishment God had threatened thereto. *Whosoever*, in the Feast of the Passover *eats leavened*

* 1 Cor. v. 7.

Bread,

Bread, from the first Day to the seventh Day, that Soul shall be cut off from Israel, *Exod.* xii. 15.

Thus necessary is it for all Men, who would please God, to frequent this Ordinance, and to come to the Holy Sacrament when they are call'd to it. They have *Christ's express Command for it*, who, by injoining it, *has required Obedience in such an Instance, as best shews their particular Reverence and Love to him*; and to engage them the more to it, has *freed them from all the Load of* Jewish *Ceremonies, and imposed no heavier Burden, than it and Baptism instead of them*; and to make it have the more Effect, has *left it among the last Words which he spake to them*; and to shew that it was a Matter of no small Moment, would have it *expressly specified and inserted in St.* Paul's *Commission*; and tells them, That *unless they come therein to eat his Flesh, and drink his Blood, they have no Life in them*; and *will punish the Neglect, or Abuse of it, as he did of the* Jewish *Passover which answer'd to it, with Excision:* All which shew the *Greatness of the Duty*, and how much it is every Man's Concern faithfully to discharge the same, who would hope to have the *Favour of God*, or *to go to Heaven.*

And as this appears from the *obliging Import*, and *Expressiveness of our Blessed Lord's Command about it*; so doth it,

2*dly*, From the *obliging Nature of those Things, which are meant by it.* For therein we *publickly own Christ* and *his Religion*, and *solemnly remember him*, and *confirm the New Covenant with Almighty God*, and a *League of Friendship with all our Christian Brethren*, and are *vouchsafed the highest Honour*, and *receive Tokens of the greatest Love*, and *Injoyment of present Graces*, and *Pledges of future Glories from him:* All which *no ingenuous Man will*, and no *good Man ought* to refuse, when he is call'd to them.

1*st*, In

1*ſt*, In the *Bleſſed Sacrament*, I ſay, we *publickly own Chriſt, and profeſs his Religion.* This was always underſtood to be the Meaning of *Feaſts on Sacrifices*, both among *Jews* and *Gentiles*; they who would eat of the Sacrifice offer'd to any *God* or *Idol*, were look'd upon to have *Fellowſhip* and *Communion with him*, and thereby to *own their joining in that Worſhip and Service, which was paid to him. They joined themſelves to* Baal-Peor, ſays the *Pſalmiſt*, when they *ate the Sacrifices of the Dead*, i. e. when they feaſted on thoſe Sacrifices which were offered to the Dead, *Pſal.* cvi. 28. and *Numb.* xxv. 1, 2, 3. Thus St. *Paul* tells us it was in the Sacrifical Feaſts of the *Jews*, for *they that ate of their Sacrifices, were Partakers of their Altars.* And thus he tells us it was among the *Gentiles*, and that they who feaſted in the *Idol-Temples* on the *Sacrifices made to Devils*, did thereby declare their Communion with them, and had *Fellowſhip with Devils.* And the ſame is true of the Feaſt of the *Lord's Supper*, which upon this Account, he makes Parallel to them, and compares with them. In *Iſrael after the Fleſh*, ſays he, *they who eat of the Sacrifice*, are Sharers in the Worſhip, or *Partakers of the Altar.* And in the things which the *Gentiles ſacrifice to Devils, they* who feaſt on the Sacrifices, *have Fellowſhip with Devils.* And therefore you that feaſt with the Lord at his Table, and thereby have Fellowſhip with him; muſt not mix Light and Darkneſs, Chriſt and *Belial* together, and, by feaſting with Devils at their Tables, have Fellowſhip with them too. *You cannot drink the Cup of the Lord, and the Cup of Devils; you cannot be Partakers of the Lord's Table, and of the Table of Devils*; ſince that were to unite the moſt oppoſite Intereſts, by holding Fellowſhip, and profeſſing yourſelves to be the Servants of Chriſt, and of the Devil alſo,

1 *Cor.*

1 *Cor.* x. 16, 18, 20, 21. Our joining in the Holy Communion, is our avow'd owning of Faith in our crucified Lord, and of our Adherence to him. By eating and drinking at his Table, of *broken Bread*, and *Wine poured out*, which are the Repreſentation of his *Death*; we *tell it out to all the World*, that we are the *Servants of that Lord*, and *Worſhippers of that Jeſus*, who gave himſelf to be *crucified and to die* for us. *As often as ye eat this Bread, and drink this Cup*, ſaith St. *Paul*, *ye do ſhew forth the Lord's Death till he come.* Ye *ſhew forth his Death*, i. e. ye * tell it abroad, and profeſs to all the World, that he died for you, and is Lord over you, and that you own him ſo to be, 1 *Cor.* xi. 26.

Thus is our eating Bread, and drinking Wine at the Lord's Table, an open Profeſſion of his Religion, and a Token whereby we give out to all the World, who ſee what we do, that we belong to him. It is a moſt ſolemn Sign of our Relation to Chriſt, and a publick Badge of our being Chriſtians. And this ſure no Man will decline, when there is a fit Occaſion, who is not aſhamed of his Lord, nor repents of his Profeſſion. But if he is really a Follower of Chriſt, and would be thought one, he will let all the World know it, by joining in this Feaſt, which is the moſt ſolemn Badge, and authentick Mark, which Chriſt has appointed of his Followers.

2*dly*, In coming to the Holy Sacrament, according to our Lord's Appointment, we *ſolemnly remember him*, and *think of the Relation wherein we ſtand to him*, and of *the Benefits which we have received from him. Do this*, ſays he, *in Remembrance of me*, 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25.

And when he is call'd to remember his moſt precious Saviour, who has both lived and died to

* Καταγγέλλετε.

make

make God his Friend, and to do him Service; there is no Man ſure, who has any Thing of *Shame*, or *Ingenuity* left in him, who will ſhew Backwardneſs, and begin to make Excuſes. For has not he done enough for us, to deſerve to be thought of? Do not all the inexpreſſible Favours which he has gain'd, and all the exquiſite Pains which he underwent for our Sakes, moſt juſtly challenge to be held in Remembrance? He left *unutterable Glories*, and ſubmitted to *all ſorts of earthly Calamities*, and took *unwearied Pains*, and ſhew'd *invincible Patience*, and laid down at laſt *his own Life* to ſave our Souls; and muſt all this be forgotten now it is done, and quite buried in Silence? What Man of any *Ingenuity*, who has been happy in ſuch a *Friend*, can be averſe to remember him? What Man, who has been bleſſed in ſuch a *Saviour*, can ever decline the Thoughts of him? Unleſs we will ſhew ourſelves *groſly ſtupid*, or *intolerable proud*, and *both* ways *Monſters of Ingratitude*; we muſt needs be ready to celebrate the Memory of ſuch a Perſon, when we are call'd to do that Honour to him; and no Perſon that would be thought a *Man*, much more a *Chriſtian*, muſt ever refuſe to remember his Saviour Chriſt, and give him Thanks, when in the Holy Sacrament he is call'd to it in Chriſt's own Name, and by his ſpecial Invitation.

3*dly*, In eating Bread and drinking Wine at the Bleſſed Sacrament, we *confirm the New Covenant with Almighty God.* In this Feaſt, as has been ſhewn, we aſſure him that we will *repent of every Sin*, which we can know ourſelves to be guilty of, as ever we hope that he will *forgive* us; and that we will *endeavour*, *with* his Grace, after *every Virtue*, as ever we expect that he ſhould *aſſiſt* us; and *obey every one of his Commandments*, as ever

we look that he ſhould crown us with *eternal Happineſs*; and *believe*, that, *for Chriſt's Sake*, we ſhall have the *Pardon*, *Grace*, and *eternal Life upon theſe Terms*, and *not otherwiſe*. For all theſe Duties, we give him our Word and Promiſe; and, on that Condition, for all theſe Bleſſings, he gives us his Seal and Aſſurance back again.

And what Man is there, who pretends to the Name of a *Chriſtian*, who will refuſe to do this, when he has an authetick Summons, nay, even a friendly Invitation? Will he not *repent*, that he may be *forgiven?* Nor *endeavour* after ſuch Graces as he wants, that *God's Holy Spirit* may *help* him to them? Nor *obey* all his Savour's Laws, that he may be *happy in Heaven?* Nor *believe*, that Chriſt has purchaſed theſe Benefits for us at God's Hands, upon theſe Terms; but that without performing them, we ſhall never have them? If he will not do all this, why doth he make any Pretence to Religion? If he is unreſolv'd, and ſuſpends about any of theſe Particulars why doth he profeſs himſelf a *Chriſtian?* For theſe Things, are the very Subſtance of *Chriſtianity*, and the Life and Soul of all *Religion*. No Man can belong to Chriſt without them, and when he was *baptized* and came to him, he ſolemnly undertook and engaged for them. And therefore if any Man will refuſe to make God his Engagement of this *Faith*, *Repentance*, and *Obedience*, when he is call'd to *promiſe* and *profeſs* them; he revolts from his *baptiſmal Vow*, and, if he perſiſts in that Mind, may as well renounce his Profeſſion, and turn his Back on the whole Chriſtian Religion.

4*thly*, In eating Bread and drinking Wine at the Lord's Supper, we *confirm a League of Love and Friendſhip with all our Chriſtian Brethren*; this being one End, as I have ſhewn, of this Meeting;

and we being therein to *profeſs ourſelves in perfect Peace and Charity with all Men.*

And who now, that owns himſelf a *Chriſtian*, can ſeek Shifts, and ſhun this, when God calls him to do it? When his Saviour, who died to make God Friends with him, aſks him to be Friends with all the World; can he refuſe him? When he invites him to be at Peace with all his Members, and to embrace them all as his Brethren; can he fly both from him and them? If he ſhun this, he may as well ſhun every thing elſe, and quit all Claim to his Religion. For *by this*, ſays our Saviour, *ſhall all Men know that you are my Diſciples, if you have Love one to another*, John xiii. 35. And *unleſs ye forgive Men their Treſpaſſes*, ſays he again, *neither will your heavenly Father forgive you* yours, *Mat.* vi. 15. And *he that ſays he loves God, and* yet *hates his Brother*, ſaith St. John, *is a Liar*, 1 John iv. 20. And *if it be poſſible*, ſaith St. *Paul, and as much as in you lies, live peaceably with all Men*, Rom. xii. 18. *Love*, and *Peace*, and *mutual Friendſhip*, and *Beneficence*, are the great Duties which Chriſt's Law preſcribes, and which all his Followers muſt be forward at all times to make Profeſſion of. And therefore if any Man turns away from declaring them; he turns his Back on the moſt Signal Duty of his Religion, and will not come to that, whereby, above all things elſe, he ſhould declare himſelf a Chriſtian.

5thly, In feaſting with God at the Holy Sacrament, we are *vouchſafed the higheſt Honour*, and *receive Tokens of greateſt Love*, and *Injoyment of preſent Graces*, and *Pledges of future Glory from him*; and theſe no Man ought to refuſe, when he is call'd to them.

He

He *vouchsafes us the greatest Honour.* For he calls us to his *own Table*, and tells us he is most glad to see us there, and that the oftner we come, the welcomer we shall be to his Supper; he invites us as his *own Guests*, and thereby seeks our *Company* and *Acquaintance*, and treats us as his *Friends* and *Confidents:* which Honour is so high, that greater cannot be shewed us.

He *gives us surest Tokens of the highest Love.* For he calls us to feast upon the *Body* and *Blood of his own Son*, i. e. upon those Blessings which the breaking of his Body and the shedding of his Blood procured for Mankind; and shews us plainly, that he is still of the same Mind, and is glad, that for our sakes, he parted with him; for his inviting us to eat the Body, and drink the Blood of Christ in this Holy Supper, imports as much as if he should say to us, *Lo! Here my dear and only Son, whom I gave to shed his own hearts Blood a Ransom for your Souls. When I did it, your Sins were most provoking, and render'd you utterly undeserving of it; and since you have received it, you have not been affected therewith as you ought to have been, but have shewed yourselves most unthankful for the same. But yet all this doth not make me repent of what I have done, or grudge you the Benefit of him. I am come here freely to present you with him, and do invite you, and exhort you, nay, intreat you to accept him. Eat his Body, and drink his Blood*, i. e. those Benefits, and that Expiation which were the Purchase thereof; *I freely give them without grudging, nay, I shall take it extremely ill if you refuse them. For I would by all means have you receive the Advantage of him. I gave him once for you, and now again I give him to you; I am still of the same mind, to part with my own dear Son for your Sakes, and to bestow him upon you: I have nothing*

better, or dearer, wherewith to present you; but with Him in this Holy Feast I do; and what higher Tokens can I give, of the unbounded Love I bear you?

He *gives us present Injoyment of many invaluable Graces.* For the Lord's Supper is a Treasury of Blessings, conveying to all those, who worthily partake thereof, the *Pardon of their Sins*, and *Strength against all Temptations*, and *Heavenly Improvements*, or *Growth in all Virtues*, as I shall shew under the *next* Head.

And *lastly*, He *gives us the surest Pledges of future Glory.* For when he offers us his *own Son*, we may be sure he will not stick at any thing else, since he has nothing that is in any comparable Degree so precious and dear to him, as he is. This Gift is a *Faithful Earnest*, and *certain Pledge* of every thing else, which he can give us. For *he that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not with him give us freely all Things?* says St. *Paul*, Rom. viii. 32.

Thus in the *Blessed Sacrament*, are we *vouchsafed the greatest Honour*, and *receive Tokens of highest Love*, and *Injoyment of present Graces*, and *Pledges of future Glories from Almighty God.*

And what Man now will refuse all these, when he is invited to them? Who can turn his Back upon that Ordinance, wherein God calls him, that he may give Honour to him, and shew by the highest Tokens how he loves him, and confer upon him present Graces, and give him Pledges of future Glories, and assure him what regard he has for him, and how happy he intends to make him? *Common Ingenuity*, and *good Manners*, nay, every Man's own *private Interest* and *self Advantage*, oblige him most readily to embrace such Offers, and not to *slight*, or so much as *slowly to accept* of

them. So that if any Perſon really believes, that all this Honour is ſhewn, this Love is expreſſed, theſe Graces given, or theſe Glories are aſſured to him in the Holy Communion: he muſt needs think himſelf highly obliged to come to it, and never caſt about to ſeek Shifts, and make Excuſes, or expreſs a backward and unwilling Mind, when he has an Invitation and an Opportunity ſo to do.

And thus it appears how much all the *Diſciples of Chriſt*, who are *grown up* to it, and *underſtand* it (for no Duty obliges an *incapable* Subject) are bound to frequent this Holy Sacrament. It is their Duty *to come to the Communion*, as it is *to come to Church*, to be *Chaſt*, *Sober*, *Humble*, *Juſt*, or to perform *any other Precept* of their *Religion*. For they have their *Saviour Chriſt's expreſs Command for it*, who by joining it, has *required Obedience in ſuch an Inſtance*, *as beſt ſhews their peculiar Reverence and Love to him*; and to ingage them the more to it, has *freed them from all the load of* Jewiſh *Ceremonies*, *and impoſed no heavier Burden*, *than it and Baptiſm inſtead of them*; and, to make it take the ſurer Effect with them, *left it among the laſt Words which he ſpake to them*; and to ſhew it was a Matter of no ſmall Moment, would have it *expreſly ſpecified in St.* Paul's *Commiſſion*; and tells them, That *unleſs they come therein to eat his Fleſh*, *and drink his Blood*, *they have no Life in them*; and *will puniſh the Neglect*, *or Abuſe of it*, *as he did the Neglect of the* Jewiſh *Paſſover*, *which anſwer'd to it*, *with Exciſion*. And the *Nature of thoſe Things which are meant by it*, and of thoſe *Employments which are to be exerciſed at it*, moſt *ſtraightly oblige* them to it. For therein they ſhew they have *Fellowſhip with Chriſt*, and *appertain to his Religion*, and *thankfully remember him*, and *ſeal the New Covenant with Almighty God*, and a *League of Love*

and *Friendſhip with their Chriſtian Brethren*, and are *vouchſafed the higheſt Honour* and *receive Tokens of the greateſt Love*, and *Injoyment of preſent Graces*, and *Pledges of future Glories from him:* which are things, that every *ingenuous* Man *will do*, and every *good* Man *ought* to do; and which no Man, when he is call'd thereto, can honeſtly decline, who profeſſes himſelf a Chriſtian.

Thus is it a *neceſſary Duty* in every Chriſtian Man to *come* to the *Holy Sacrament*, as it is to *come* to *Church*, or to other *Parts of Worſhip:* And *when once we are of Age for it*, and *have a fit Opportunity and Occaſion offer'd* of joining in the ſame, we are in ſtrict Duty ingaged, and by a Bond of many Cords, as we have ſeen, obliged ſo to do.

1*ſt*, I ſay, we are *bound to it, when once we are of Age for it.* The Duty of this *Holy Sacrament* lies in ſuch Things, as ſuppoſe a competent Underſtanding, and due Knowledge of Religion, in thoſe who muſt diſcharge them. For therein we are to *remember Chriſt*, both what Commands he has left with us, and what he has done and ſuffer'd for us; and this we cannot do, till *firſt we have learnt* them. We muſt *ingage to be at Peace*, *to do Juſtice*, and *ſhew Kindneſs to all our Brethren*; and this ſuppoſes that we know *firſt* what *Offices of Love*, and *Acts of Juſtice are due* to them. We muſt *conſent to the Terms of the New Covenant*, and this implies that, *firſt* we ſhould *underſtand* them. In *Baptiſm*, indeed, we enter'd into it before we had any Knowledge of it; but that was becauſe God (who deals with us after the moſt favourable Manner of Men, who allow grown Perſons to bear the Parts, and federally to undertake for Infants, in Things conducing to their Advantage) admitted our *Sponſors*, who knew it very well, to ſtand as our *Repreſentatives*, and in way of *Proxies*, to

to covenant and undertake for us. But the Sacrament of the *Lord's Supper*, is to be our *own Act*, and an expreſs Aſſenting in our own Perſons to what our *Sponſors* formerly undertook; and this cannot be done till we are come to Years, and are able of ourſelves to judge of it.

Till we are grown up then to the Age of competent Knowledge in ſpiritual Affairs, we are not *capable* of diſcharging the Duty of this Holy Sacrament aright. And till we are ſo, we are not obliged to it, ſince no Duty obliges an *incapable* Subject. For it is in this Duty, as it is in that of *making Peace*, or *giving good Advice*, or any others; they bind us not, till we are grown up to them, and are come to know rightly how to diſcharge them. For on all theſe Caſes, God exacts an Account only of thoſe *Talents* which he has entruſted with us, as we are told in the *Parable* of the Men who had *received the Talents*, Mat. xxv. and his Rule of proceeding is this, *unto whomſoever much is given, of him ſhall much be required*; *and to whom Men have committed much, of him they will aſk the more*, Luke xii. 48.

2*dly*, When we are of *Age* for it, we are bound to it only *when we have an Opportunity, and a fit Occaſion is offered.* It is in the *Communion at the Sacrament*, as it is in *our Communion in Prayers, and other Parts of Worſhip*; we are *bound to join in them when they can be had, and when we are not lawfully hindered and diverted from them.* But if either there is *no Place* for them, or we are *juſtly hindered* from attending on them; we have no obliging Opportunity for that Time, but may without Sin omit them. And thus it is, when we are hindered by ſome *Call of Providence*, when at that Time we are call'd away to do ſome neceſſary Duty of *Juſtice*, or *Charity*, in another Place. Or when we are

detained at Home by ſome *Diſeaſes*, or *bodily Indiſpoſition*, under which it is not ſafe to go Abroad, or to venture out beyond our own Chambers; in which Caſe God, who prefers *Mercy before Sacrifice* when they thwart and interfere, *i. e. eſſential Duties*, before *poſitive Precepts*, will excuſe us. Or, laſtly, when *our Minds are diſturbed* by *great Grief*, that cannot preſently be caſt off, or by *ſudden Anger*, or *Diſcontent* occaſioned hard before the Reception thereof (which Diſturbance of Mind, though ordinarily it be our own Fault and culpable, may yet ſometimes be more innocent or excuſeable;) at which Time, ſince their Diſcompoſure unfits them for ſo Divine a Service, they may for the Preſent omit it, as being indiſpoſed for it. This St. *Peter* intimates of *Prayers* (and the Reaſon is the ſame of *this Ordinance*) when he exhorts the *Huſband*, by a *diſcreet Compliance*, and *patient Bearing of his Wives Infirmities*, to prevent all *Peeviſhneſs* and *domeſtick Quarrels*, that ſo they may have no need to *omit* or *put by* their *Devotions*; which it ſeems, they would need to do, if their Minds were acted at that Time by ſuch undue Tempers. *Ye Huſbands*, ſays he, *dwell with your Wives according to Knowledge*; *giving Honour to the Wives*, or treating them with Lenity and Care, becauſe they are *the weaker Veſſels*, *that your Prayers be not hindered* by thoſe Heats and Animoſities, which very likely might ariſe otherwiſe, 1 *Pet.* iii. 7. And this was once the Caſe of St. *Chryſoſtom* *, who, at the Time of adminiſtring the Holy Sacrament, being accidentally much diſcompoſed in Mind, by an unſeaſonable demand of Juſtice made by *Euſebius* againſt *Antonine* in the

* Παρακαλέσας Παυσόφιον ὁ Πισσίδης προαγαγεῖν τὰ δῶρα αὐτῷ συνεξῆλθεν τοῖς λοιποῖς ἐπισκόποις Παρητεῖτο γὰρ ἀθύμως ἱερατεύειν. Pallad. Dial. de Vit. Chryſ. p. 128.

Synod

Synod then assembled, went out, and desired one of the *Bishops* then present, to Officiate, declining the Communion at that instant, because he had *some Trouble upon his Spirit.*

If then we either are *not come to Years to understand it*, or have *no obliging Opportunity for it*, or *some just Hinderance that would excuse our joining in the same*; this Duty of the Holy Sacrament may *lawfully be omitted.* It is alike in *it*, as it is in our *joining in Prayers*, or *going to Church*; it admits of the *same Excuses*, and obliges in the *same Case.* But where these rare Contingencies happen not, to exempt from it; it is a strict Duty, that is bound upon us, as we have seen, by a Bond of many Cords, and a peremptory Commandment. So that when we have an Opportunity for it, and no just Hinderance to put us by the same, to Communicate is a strict Precept, and in all Duty we are obliged so to do.

But against this Expressiveness of the Command, and Strictness of the Duty to Communicate; some, perhaps, may urge the Words of St. *Paul*, 1 Cor. xi. *Do this, as often as you drink it, in Remembrance of me*, ver. 25. Which Words, *as often* seem to limit the Precept only to the *Remembrance of Christ when we do Communicate*, and to intimate, as if we had no Command to *do this*, and so without Sin might omit it when we please, but only to *remember him when we do.*

Now in *Answer to this*, I observe,

1*st*, That these Words, *Do this, as often as ye drink it, in Remembrance of me*, if we had no other Proof for it, *would not clearly amount to an obliging Command, and prove it a strict Duty to Communicate.* For that which is plainly and indisputably expressed in them, is not that we *should Communicate*, but that we *should Remember Christ when we do*

do Communicate; and they might be uſed, and have their full Senſe, if nothing more than this were intended by them.

But as of themſelves they do not amount to ſuch a Precept; ſo,

2dly, *Neither do they infer the contrary, and prove againſt it.* All that which they do expreſs, is only that we muſt remember Chriſt when we do communicate; and this is done, whether communicating itſelf be a Duty, or whether it be no Duty; and ſuiting thus equally with any Side, as it doth not prove it a Duty to receive the Sacrament, ſo neither doth it prove that there is no Duty in the ſame. And of this we have ſtill a further Argument, becauſe if theſe Words, *as often, &c.* infer there is no Duty to communicate, the ſame may be inferr'd of Prayer, ſince in *another Place* they are ſpoken of it, as *here* they are of the Holy Sacrament. *When, i. e.* as often as *ye pray*, ſays our Saviour, *ſay, Our Father which art in Heaven*, &c. Luke xi. 2. So that if they prove that we are *not bound to communicate*, but to *remember Chriſt when we do it*; they will prove alſo that we are *not bound to pray*, but only directed to uſe *this Form* in Prayer *when we pray.*

Thus are theſe Words, *do this as often as ye drink it*, &c. neither an Argument that to communicate is a Duty, nor an Argument againſt it. They are indifferent, and equally incline both Ways; ſo that when *that* is the *Queſtion*, of themſelves they are no ſufficient Proof on any Side, but other things muſt decide it.

And then, 3*dly*, Altho' *this* Place do not prove it an expreſs Duty to communicate, yet there are other *Palces enow that do ſufficiently evince it.* For in *this* very *Chapter*, the Words of our Lord at the

the *Eating of the Bread* are abſolute, and imply an *expreſs Command* for *it: Do this*, ſays he, *i. e.* Take and eat Bread as ye now do, *in Remembrance of me*; where not only the Remembrance is joined, but alſo this particular Way of doing it, *viz.* by eating Bread, wherein he is to be remembred, 1 *Cor.* xi. 24. And ſo it is alſo in St. * *Luke*, where the Words are *peremptory* for the *Apoſtles adminiſtring*, and ſo anſwerably for the *Peoples receiving* it, without any Intimation of the *Eating itſelf* being *indifferent* and *uncommanded*; which that *Evangeliſt* would not have expreſſed ſo unwarily, if it had been our Saviour's Deſign to leave them ſtill at Liberty therein. Beſides that this Command to us with ſuch further Marks and Circumſtances, as ſhew that our Lord is particularly careful to be *obeyed therein*; and the very Things themſelves, which are ſignified by ſuch ſacramental Eating, are all ſo many Obligations and Enforcements of the ſame, as I have already ſhewn.

When therefore in this Place the *Apoſtle* ſays of the drinking of the Cup, *Do this, as often as ye drink it*, he doth not intimate that we may do it as ſeldom as we pleaſe, or as if it were under no Law or expreſs Precept. He uſes the Words, *as often*, not becauſe it is an *arbitrary Act*, and there is no Duty in it; but becauſe, tho' it be a Duty, yet we have not *always Opportunity for it*, and ſo cannot *always* be performing it, for, as has been ſhewn, there is a Command to communicate, and that, as all other *affirmative Laws* binds us to it at all Times when we have a fit *Occaſion* offered for the ſame. When we eat and drink in the Sacrament, we muſt remember Chriſt; and when

* Luke xxii. 19.

we

we have Opportunity to eat and drink there, we are obliged to embrace it; as the *Jews*, we saw, were to eat of the *Paſſover* which anſwered to it, who were to be cut off from *Iſrael*, when at any Time they omitted it. So that to communicate is no *arbitrary* Act, but an *indiſpenſable Duty*, and peremptory Command ſtill.

And ſince it is thus neceſſary a Duty in every *grown Chriſtian* to *come* to the Holy Sacrament; it muſt needs be a *great* and *dangerous Sin* in any of us, when we *neglect* and *abſtain* from it. We muſt not think it an *indifferent* Thing, but make *Conſcience* of *keeping off from the Holy Communion*, as we do of *keeping off from Prayers*, or *publick Aſſemblies*, or *making Omiſſions at any other Duties.* For it is expreſly and ſtraitly forbidden by God, as well as *they*, and we incur his Anger, and, till we repent and do ſo no more, cannot regain his Favour, when we are guilty of any of them.

A Neglect of the Lord's Table therefore is a *Sin*, which altho' *God may excuſe* in thoſe good Souls, who, *becauſe of their over-high Veneration for it*, and *Fear of their own Unworthineſs to partake therein*, in the *Honeſty of their Hearts* think they ought not to come to it: Yet will he *not excuſe it in them when they are better informed*; and *much leſs in others who neglect it, becauſe they are careleſs of it*, or *too wicked and impenitent to receive it.*

He may excuſe it, I ſay, *in thoſe good Souls, who in the Honeſty of their Hearts, thro' Ignorance or Error, were held back*, and *becauſe of their over-high Veneration for it, and Fear of their Unworthineſs to partake in it, thought they ought not to come to it.* An *innocent Ignorance*, or *Miſtake of an honeſt Mind*, may plead our Excuſe before God in

in this, as well as it doth in *other* Duties. For in all of them, *Chriſt* has *ſuch a Senſe of our Infirmities, as that he can have Compaſſion on the Ignorant, and thoſe that* err, or *are out of the Way*, Heb. v. 2. So that if after an upright Endeavour to be rightly informed therein; ſome good Minds ſhall happen to miſtake, their Error will not be imputed to them. It may be thro' the *looſe Diſcourſes of ſome*, or the *general Practice* of the World, who, by being ſo ſeldom at it, ſeem to ſet lightly by it; they think themſelves *not obliged* to it. Or again, thro' the *extream Rigidneſs* of the Diſcourſes of *others*, who require ſuch extraordinary Things to a worthy Receiving as very few have attained unto; they think themſelves always *unworthy* and *unprepared* for it, and that they ſhould ſin thereby, and eat their *own Damnation*. But if they fall into theſe Miſtakes which make them abſtain from this Holy Feaſt, after an honeſt Endeavour to be rightly informed about it; their Ignorance may plead their Excuſe, and make their Neglect to be connived at. God will not account it to them as a Sin, becauſe they knew it not, but were miſtaken. For in this, as well as in other Caſes, *to him that knows to do Good, and doth it not, to him it is a Sin*, Jam. iv. 17.

But tho' God may bear with this *Neglect of the Holy Sacrament* in *good Men*, whilſt they are thus *innocently miſled:* Yet *will he not excuſe it in them, when they are better informed*; and much leſs in *others, who neglect it becauſe they are careleſs of it*, or *too impenitent to receive it.*

He will not excuſe it even in them, when they are better informed; or *are in Place, and under Opportunity of being ſo, if it is not their own Fault.* Their only Plea for their not doing of this Duty, is, that after the beſt Search they could make, they did not

not know they were bound to it, or that with Safety they could perform it; and when once their Understanding is inlightened, or might be if they pleased, this Plea is removed, so that afterwards they can find no Relief at all from it. They abstain then, when they know, or may know, unless they have a Mind to be ignorant thereof; that if they are truly penitent, they *might* and *ought* to come; and that Abstinence is *wilful*, and, unless they repent of it and amend it, will end in their Condemnation. For *to him that knoweth to do Good, and doeth it not, to him it is Sin*, Jam v. 17.

And much less *will he excuse it in others, who are careless of it*, and *too impenitent to receive it.* If they are hindered from the Lord's Table out of *Slothfulness*, or are unworthy of it by Reason of their *Impenitence*; those are not their *Excuse*, but their own *damning Sin*, and they must expect to bear the Punishment of it. To tell God I did not come to the Sacrament because I would not repent, is to tell him I would not come and promise to be good, because I was resolved to continue wicked; and that is a very odd Way of excusing it. *Impenitence* is no Excuse, but a most damning Sin; and therefore if we have no other Cause to give why we did not come, we must needs be liable to Condemnation.

If any of you therefore who shall peruse *this Treatise*, have refused God's Invitation formerly, and have kept back from this Holy Feast; by what I here said, you may see your Offence, and how nearly you are concerned, as you tender your *dear Saviour's Honour*, or the *Safety of your own most precious Souls*, to amend it. You have offended God in *not coming to the Holy Communion*, as you would offend him in *not coming to Church*,

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in *not saying your Prayers*, in *not giving Thanks for Mercies*, in *not being humble*, *honest*, and *upright in your Dealings*, or in omitting any *other Duties*. So that you must not think all is well with you when you keep away, as if you had done nothing. If the true Cause why you abstain, was your *well meant Mistake* about it, and your not knowing, after all the Search you had Opportunity to make, that every good Man, who repents of all his Sins, is worthy and fit to partake in it: God will wink at your *Ignorance* whilst it lasted; but that will be no Excuse to you, after once you are *better informed*; so that now you will be guilty of a damning Offence, if you still neglect it after you have been sufficiently told thereof. But if you have absented hitherto, out of a *careless Spirit*, which would not attend the Times, or be at the Pains to come to it; or because you have an *impenitent Heart*, which will not promise that Amendment and new Life that is to be undertaken for and ingaged to God therein: Then has your absenting been your damning Sin, which has provoked God against you, as all other Acts of Disobedience and Irreligion do. If this is your Case, you must look upon yourselves all this while to have been in a great Fault, which God will not forgive till you seriously repent of it and amend it. For God will forgive you this Sin of neglecting the Holy Sacrament, upon the same Condition, whereon he will forgive you all others, namely, when you *forsake it*, and *turn away* from it, and, instead of absenting, learn to frequent the same. So that if you would keep a *good Conscience towards God*, and *die in Peace*, and have no *unrepented Sins* to answer for at the last Judgment: Every one of you, that has sinfully slighted this Blessed Sacrament hitherto, must come to it hence-

henceforward, and, according to your Saviour Christ's holy Commandment, readily partake in it when you are called thereto.

CHAP. II.

Of the Benefits of Communicating.

The CONTENTS.

The Sacrament is full of Blessings, which make it not only our Duty, but our Privilege. In the general, *it is the most effectual Means in all Religion to recommend our Prayers, and make them powerful; and so is the likeliest Way to attain all Mercies.* In particular, 1. *It seals to us the Pardon of our Sins for the Peace of our Consciences.* 2. *It encreases and confirms in us all Graces: Those are ordinarily such as we bring along with us.* It confers Grace, 1. *By the natural Virtue and Tendency of those Duties, which it both exercises, and excites in us.* 2. *By those inward Assistances which it conveys to us. Since on all these Accounts it is so excellent a Means of Grace and new Life, it is the best Rule any Person can observe, who would go on in the Work of Repentance. All these Motives to communicate, both from Duty and Interest, summ'd up.*

HAVING shewn in the *former Chapter* how much it is *every Christian's Duty to frequent the Holy Sacrament*, who is of *Age* to come to it, and how greatly they *sin* against God who *neglect* it, both from the *obliging Nature of the Thing*, and from

from Christ's *expreſs Commandment.* I proceed now in this Chapter,

4*thly*, To ſhew *what great Inducements we have to it*, and *how great the Benefits are that come thereby*, *which ſhould make us preſs to it of ourſelves*, *were it not commanded.*

The Holy Sacrament has Bleſſings enow within itſelf to recommend it to our Choice, if God had not interpoſed his Authority, and laid that Weight upon it which he has. It is fully ſtored with Benefits, which render it not only a *ſtrict Duty*, but an *high Privilege* to come thereto, as the *Chriſtian Church* has always thought, whoſe *great Penalty* lay in a *Separation* or *Excluſion* from it. It is not only a Matter of Honour to God, but alſo of the higheſt Advantage to ourſelves; ſo that in all Reaſon we ought to ſeek it, and heartily thank God that we may be admitted to it, out of a Care of our own Happineſs and pure Self-Intereſt.

Of theſe *Benefits* I have mentioned ſome already, ſuch as its being a *Vouchſafement of higheſt Honour* to us, and a *Token of God's greateſt Love* for us, and a *certain Pledge of future Glories*; of all which I have diſcourſed in the laſt Chapter. But beſides them, it is full of many other *ſingular Bleſſings* and *preſent Graces*, which I ſhall now treat of in *this* Chapter. And thoſe, which I ſhall take Notice of, are theſe,

1*ſt*, In the general, *It is the moſt effectual Means in all Religion*, *to recommend our Prayers*, *and make them powerful with God*; ſo that it is *the likelieſt Way to obtain all Mercies.*

2*dly*, In particular.

1*ſt*, It *ſeals to us the Pardon of our Sins for the Peace of our Conſciencies.*

2*dly*, It *increaſes*, *and confirms in us all our Graces.*

1*ſt*, In the general, *It is the moſt effectual Means in all Religion, to recommend our Prayers, and make them powerful with God*; ſo that it is *the likelieſt way to obtain all Mercies.* And this it doth, by being a *Commemoration unto him* of *the Death of Chriſt*, which is the only Argument that prevails with him to beſtow them upon us.

It is the common Way of all Men, when they ſue for Kindneſſes from others, and think they have not Intereſt enough themſelves, to uſe ſuch Interceſſions, and ſuggeſt ſuch Things, as have moſt Power with them, and are likelieſt to incline them to grant their Deſires. And as it is thus in our Requeſts to *Men*, ſo it is in our Prayers to *God* too. We ſet thoſe Conſiderations before his Eyes, and ſuggeſt thoſe Things to his Remembrance, which are fitteſt to move his Pity, and to make him favourable towards us. Thus the holy Men, in the *Old Teſtament*, in their Prayers, are frequently putting God in mind of his * *Covenant* and *Promiſe*; and making mention of his Servant † *David*, or ‡ *Abraham*, or *Iſaac*, or *Iſrael*, for whom they knew he had an eſpecial Kindneſs; and with their *Prayers* they uſed to join *Sacrifice*, hoping to be the eaſier heard when they came with their Atonement in their Hands, and that the Life of the Beaſt being offered up in Commutation, and accepted inſtead of theirs, God would be the eaſier appeaſed, and more inclined to hear their Supplications. Upon which Account, that their Prayers might have a powerful Argument to recommend them going along with them, they were careful to offer them up at the *Hour of Sacrifice*, as appears from the Prayer

* Pſal. cxix. 49. 2 Chron. vi. 42. † Pſal. cxxxii. 1, 10.
‡ Deut. ix. 27, and Exod. xxxii. 13.

of

of *Ezra*, *Ezra* ix. 5. and of *David*, *Pſal.* cxli. 2. at the *Evening Sacrifice.*

Now that which powerfully *intercedes* with God for us, and which was ſhadowed out by all the *Jewiſh Sacrifices*, is our *Saviour's Death.* For it was his *Blood* that *merited* ſo highly at God's Hands as to make him think of ſhewing Favour, and being kind to us. *It is the Blood of Propitiation*, Rom. iii. 25. that *makes Peace between God and Men*, Col. i. 23, and *ſpeaks better Things than the Blood of* Abel, calling for Life and Salvation, as that did for Deſtruction, *Heb.* xii. 24. And it is the *Repreſentation of that Blood* now in *heavenly Places*, that *gives Chriſt himſelf ſuch abſolute Power with God*, and makes him ſure to prevail whenſoever he *intercedes* for us. For *by it he entered into the Holy Place where the Mercy Seat or Propitiatory was*, Heb. ix. 3, 5, 12, 24. and where *he ever loves to make Interceſſion for us.* Heb, vii. 25. So that the great Argument which either *Chriſt our High-Prieſt* now in *Heaven* offers for us, or which in our Prayers we can plead for ourſelves, is his *own Death* and *Sufferings.*

Now this is ſet before God in every *Prayer*, and in *all Acts of Religion*, in all which we uſe *Chriſt's Name*, and deſire to be heard and hope to prevail thro' *his Mediation.* But in the *Holy Sacrament*, it is done *more perfectly*, and with *greater Solemnity*, and that too by *God's own Appointment.* For one chief End of the Holy Sacrament, is, to *commemorate the Death of Chriſt*, *i. e.* to ſet it out in ſolemn Shew, and make mention of it, not only before *Men*, but alſo to *Almighty God. This do in Remembrance* or * Commemoration *of me*, ſays our Saviour, *Luk.* xxii. 19.

* Εἰς ἀνάμνησιν.

And *as often as ye do it*, says St. *Paul*, *ye shew forth the Lord's Death*, *i. e.* both to *God* and *Man*, *till he come*, 1 Cor. xi. 26.

Thus do we no where so livelily and advantageously set out this great Argument of being heard, as in the Holy Sacrament: Which we may justly hope will be the more observed, and have the more Effect, because it is not done of our own Heads, but by God's own special Direction and Appointment. And where the Argument is most advantageously set out, we may expect the better Effect, and greater Force from it. And this the *ancient Christians* thought, accounting their Prayers were not like to be so powerful at any Time, as when this Commemoration of Christ's Death, the only Plea for being heard, accompanied them. And therefore at the Holy Sacrament, they * used to pray not only for *themselves*, but also for *all others*, and to recommend any Person or Thing to God which was dear to them, thinking they could never so advantageously sue for them as at that Time.

Thus, in the general, is the Holy Sacrament a most *likely Means to obtain for us all Mercies*, because it is the most *effectual Course in all Religion* to *recommend our Prayers*, which must procure them for us.

2*dly*, In particular.

1*st*, It *seals to us the Pardon of our Sins*, *for the Peace of our Consciencies*.

2*dly*, It *increases and confirms in us all our Graces*.

1*st*, It *seals and confirms to us the Pardon of our Sins*, *for the Peace of our Consciencies*. In the Holy

* *Thus it is in the Form prescribed.* Constit. Apostol. l. 8. c. 12 & 15. b. 484, 485. tom. prim. Concil. ed. Lab. *And this* Eusebius *testifies*, de Vita Constant. l. 4. c. 45. See also Missam S. Basilii.

Sacra-

Sacrament, God calls us to give us a *full Pardon*, by giving us that Blood which was *ſhed for the Remiſſion of Sins*, Mat. xxvi 28. and which is the *Blood of Expiation:* And having received that at his Hand, if we are true Penitents, we need not doubt but that our Sins are expiated, and that he is reconciled to us. The Sacrament itſelf, as we have ſeen, is nothing leſs than a *ſolemn Confirmation of the New Covenant*, which promiſes Remiſſion of Sin to all that truly repent of it. So that when, with penitent Hearts, we come to join in it, we come to ſtipulate and ſecure a Pardon of all our Offences, which will give us all the Security thereof that Covenants and Promiſes can make us. Whenſoever we repent indeed, we have God's Promiſe of Forgiveneſs, which may comfort our Hearts after any Sin, not only in the *Holy Communion*, but in *every penetential Prayer and Confeſſion.* But in the Bleſſed Sacrament this Promiſe is again repeated, and in the moſt ſolemn Manner, ſealed and confirmed; to ſhew us that God is ſtill of the ſame Mind, and to give us a *renewed* and a *ſenſible* Aſſurance of it. And when God has thus ſet his Seal to it, and a penitent Soul has juſt received his Word and Bond for it; it need not queſtion but that he is reconciled, and, unleſs it ſtarts back from theſe penitential Engagements, and falls afreſh into new Provocations, that he will always continue ſo to be.

And thus the Sacrament is the moſt effectual Means to calm the Fears, and quiet the Conſciences of all true Penitents. If once they make ſure of their own Repentance after any Offences, it doth that in an *ordinary* Way, which an *Angel from Heaven*, and a *ſpecial Revelation* would do in *extraordinary*, i. e. *it lets them know that their Sins are pardoned, and that God is their Friend.* For

therein they receive from him the *Blood of Expiation*, a plain Proof that their Sins are atoned for and forgiven. And therein there is an expreſs Agreement, and *ſolemn Covenant of Peace and Reconciliation* between God and them, which is confirmed by this Feaſt of his own preſcribing: And having this Inſtrument of his own Appointment, which they may look upon as his Hand and Seal to it, they may chearfully depend upon it, and reſt ſatisfied in their own Mind.

2*dly*, It *increaſes and confirms in us all our Graces.* Theſe Graces are *ordinarily* ſuch as we *bring along with us*, which we either have already *practiſed*, or are *fully purpoſed* and *reſolved to practiſe.* For therein God gives Grace only to the *worthy Communicants*; and thoſe Communicants only are *worthy*, who *repent of all their Sins*, and are wholly determin'd to lead a new Life, in Obedience to all his holy Commandments. It is not a Sacrament intended to give Strength in Grace to thoſe that have nothing of it; for it is our *ſpiritual Meat* and *Bread*, as our Saviour calls it, *John* vi. 51, 55. the Uſe whereof is not to give *Life to a dead Perſon*, but *Strength* and *Nouriſhment to a living one.* It is not deſigned to turn an impenitent Man into a true Penitent, or to make an ill Man good; for every impenitent ill Man is an unworthy Receiver, and eats his *own Damnation*, which is a *Curſe* and not a Bleſſing; ſo that he is not the better, but the worſe by it. But it is intended to make a *good* Man *better*, to carry on Repentance in thoſe that have begun it, and to conform and enlarge every Virtue in thoſe who are already poſſeſſed thereof. If we come to it with *Faith*, or *Belief of the Holy Scriptures*, particularly of God's Promiſes to *pardon* our Sins, for Chriſt's Sake, upon our *true Repentance*, and to *help*

help us to any Graces upon our honeſt *Endeavours*, and to make us *eternally happy* upon our *entire Obedience*; it *ſtrengthens* and *aſſures that Faith:* If with *Love of our dear Lord*, who died for us, it *increaſes* it: If with *Thankfulneſs* for his Kindneſſes, particularly for that of giving his own Life for ours, it makes us *more ſenſible* thereof: If with *hearty Repentance*, and full Purpoſe of amending all our Sins, it makes us *unmoveable* and *ſettled* in the ſame: If with *Peace* and *Charity towards all our Neighbours*, it fills us with a *greater Abundance* of them. It augments all the Virtues of a good Man, which he brings to it, making him more perfect in them, and more ſtrong in Spirit to perſevere and go through with them. But theſe Effects it has not upon an ill Man; nor produces this Increaſe of Virtue in thoſe, who bring nothing of it along with them. So that it is no Diſparagement to the Virtue of this Bleſſed Sacrament, if wicked Men find themſelves wicked ſtill, and not at all amended by the Receipt thereof, ſince it was not ordained for their Improvement. It was not meant to give *Grace* to thoſe who are *graceleſs*, or to give *Repentance* to *impenitent* Perſons; but to carry them through their Repentance who have fully ſet upon it, and to enable them to lead a new Life, who are reſolved already within themſelves to do ſo, and to ſtrengthen them to amend a Miſcarriage, who are wholly bent to ſtrive againſt the ſame, and to confer Grace on thoſe that have it, and make them more gracious ſtill.

And this the Holy Sacrament is to every worthy Communicant. It conveys Grace into his Soul, and makes him ſtand more firm, and increaſe in every Virtue of a Chriſtian. It is an excellent Means to make him a better Man, and to carry him on to improve him in Duty and holy Liv-

ing: So that every one who comes worthily, will gain a great Increaſe of Grace and Strength, and be much ſet on ſpiritual Growth by Receiving.

Now this it doth two Ways:

1*ſt*, By the *natural Virtue and Tendency of thoſe Duties which it exerciſes and excites in us.*

2*dly*, By thoſe *inward Aſſiſtances which it conveys to us.*

1*ſt*, A worthy Receiving conveys Grace into our Souls, and confirms and increaſes us in all Virtues, by the *natural Efficacy and Tendency of of thoſe Duties which it exerciſes and excites in us.* For *it excites*, and *therein we exerciſe* ſeveral Duties, which help on a good Life, and ſet it forward; and therein *we bind ourſelves by ſolemn Vows and Engagements* to go on in it; *both* which are moſt powerful to effect and improve it.

1*ſt*, *It excites*, and *therein we exerciſe ſeveral Duties, which help on a good Life, and ſet it forward.* All the Duties of worthy Receiving, are Inſtances of an holy Life, as we have ſeen, and Parts of a good Man; but ſeveral of them are not only *particular Duties* in *themſelves*, but withal moſt powerful *Helps to the Performance of all others:* So that in performing and improving them, we do not only diſcharge and grow in *ſome* Virtues; but make a Way for our eaſy Diſcharge and fuller Growth in *all others* alſo. And theſe are a *fix'd Remembrance* and *firm Faith of Chriſt's wonderful Kindneſs* to us, eſpecially in *dying* for us; an *intenſe Love*, and *hearty Thankfulneſs*, and *intire Reſignation* of ourſelves to his Service, and *true Repentance* and *Abhorrence* of all our Sins; all which, as they are much *improved in a worthy Communion*, ſo they are moſt *powerful in helping us to become obedient* and *good Men.* 1*ſt*, I

1*ſt*, I ſay theſe Duties are *improved in by the Holy Communion.* And this they are by being both *exerciſed*, and *excited* in us at that Time.

They are *all exerciſed* in every worthy Communicant at that Time, becauſe in *them*, as we have ſeen, the *worthineſs of Receiving doth conſiſt.* And the more ſtill they are exerciſed, the more they are improved. For all *Habits* come by Uſage, and Cuſtom makes thoſe Things, which at firſt ſeem ſtrange, to become, not only *eaſy*, but *natural* to us. So that in exerciſing them at the Sacrament, we ſhall improve and add to them, and go away with a greater Meaſure of them, than we brought with us when we came.

And this we ſhall more eſpecially do, becauſe therein they are not only *exerciſed*, but mightily *excited* in us alſo. The Holy Sacrament ſuggeſts ſuch *powerful Motives* to them, and preſents us with ſuch *obliging Reaſons* for them, as we can have no where elſe; ſo that we cannot take a better Way, than by coming to it, to improve them. For therein we moſt *ſolemnly* and *attentively remember*, how, *when our Sins had made us utter Enemies of God, and Heirs of Deſtruction, Chriſt laid down his own Life in our ſtead, and by that Ranſom redeemed us from it.* And this is not only the *higheſt*, but, in a Manner, the *Sum Total* of all thoſe Inducements, which can ingage us to theſe Virtues, or poſſeſs us with the ſame. For what can poſſibly raiſe ſo *warm a Love to Chriſt* in an *ingenuous* Spirit, that is ſenſible of what is done to it, as to ſee how infinitely he has loved us, and, when we were his bitter Enemies, gave his own Life in exchange for ours? What can ever ingage us to ſo great *Thankfulneſs*, as to think that a Perſon ſo far above us, and who ſtood in no need of us; and who was not ſought to by us, but was even then moſt

moſt highly diſoblig'd and had received the greateſt Provocations from us, ſhould moſt frankly give his ownſelf to do us a Kindneſs? What can ſo powerfully move us to *reſign up ourſelves* to any one, as to ſee, that he has beſtowed himſelf upon us firſt, to buy us off from our implacable Enemies; and that for no Self-Intereſts or By-Ends of his own, but purely for our eternal Happineſs? What can work in us ſo *hearty a Repentance*, and provoke us into ſo *utter an Indignation* and *Abhorrence* of all our Sins, as to behold in our dear Lord's Agonies what they deſerv'd, and how unmeaſurably miſchievous they prov'd, and what inexpreſſible Tortures they brought upon him, when he would put himſelf in our Place, and undertake to anſwer for us? Theſe Things are moſt lively ſet out, and powerfully ſuggeſted to us in this Bleſſed Sacrament, one chief Buſineſs whereof, is ſolemnly to Commemorate and make Mention of them. And they are the moſt effectual Means that can be afforded us, to raiſe in us a conſtant Mindfulneſs, and a zealous and intenſe Love of him who died for us, and an hearty Thankfulneſs for all his Kindneſſes, and ſincere Repentance and utter Abhorrence of all our Sins, and an intire Reſignation of ourſelves to his Uſe and Service. And, the Sacrament being thus richly furniſhed with the moſt perſuaſive Motives, and thus vividly ſuggeſting to us the moſt powerful Reaſons for all theſe Virtues; it muſt needs be the beſt Courſe to improve them, and we cannot lay out our Time upon them better, or to more effect, in any other Way.

And as theſe Duties are all improved by the Holy Communion; ſo are they themſelves,

2dly, *Moſt powerful in helping of us to become obedient and good Men.* If we were but perfect in theſe Virtues, and they had once got the Aſcendant over

over us, and ruled in our Hearts; they would have an universal Influence on all others, and govern our whole Lives. For if, when we are tempted to any Sin, our *Minds*, being familiarized to it, would at that Instant readily *suggest* to us that *Christ died* for it, and that it put him to all the Pain and Anguish he suffered; we should not *endure to come near it.* If we have any *true Love* and *Zeal* for him, we shall shew no manner of *Favour* or *Compliance with it.* If we are really *Thankful* for what he has done, for *his Sake we shall withstand* it. If we are *resign'd* up to his Use, we shall have *nothing to do with it*, because *he* is utterly *against* it. And if we *abhor* it, for the Pains it put him to when he answer'd for it, and which it will at last put us to also if we continue in it, we shall *disdainfully reject* and *turn away* from it. If we *Believe* and Remember always, as we have need, that Christ died for our Sins, and procured us Pardon for them upon our true Repentance, and Grace to get quit of them upon our best Endeavours; that *Faith* will make us *Obedient*, and carry us on to amend them. If we truly *love* Christ, that Love will make us do *something for him*, and cast to please and obey him, *John* xiv. 15. If we are *Thankful* for what is done, we shall never despite him by any Sin, which, for all his *Benefits*, were to return the greatest *Injuries* again. If we are *resign'd* up to his Use, we shall *faithfully serve* him. If we are *heartily Penitent*, *and abhor* our Sins we shall forsake them. If we have this lively Faith and Remembrance of Christ's dying for us, and this intense Love, and hearty Thankfulness, and entire Resignation of ourselves to his Service, and sincere Repentance, and utter Abhorrence of all our Sins: If we have *these Virtues*, I say, and in these *prevailing Measures*, they will carry us on to an Holy Life,

Life, and make us Obedient to all God's Holy Commandments. And therefore since this Holy Sacrament, when it is worthily receiv'd, doth so much improve these Virtues in us; it must needs help us on, and improve us in all others, and in the whole Course of a good Life too.

Thus doth a worthy Receiving, by its own *natural Tendency*, confirm and increase us in all good Living, by our *exercising*, and by its *exciting* in us such Duties, as help it on, and set it forward: And so doth it,

2*dly*, By our *binding ourselves thereat, in solemn Vows and Ingagements to go on in't.*

One chief End of our Meeting at this Holy Feast, and a *prime Part* of our Worthiness in partaking thereof, is to *confirm the New Covenant*, as we have seen, and to make God our faithful Promises, that from that Day we will amend all our Sins, that so we may attain that Pardon and Happiness, which he comes to offer and assure to us upon our Amendment and true Repentance. And these *solemn Vows* and *Promises*, are a fast Hank upon us, to make us leave our Sins, and do all that he requires of us. For every Man *ought*, and thinks himself *concerned*, to be as good as his Word, and to perform what he has promised; especially, when it is to one, who is too *Wise* to be *deluded*, too *Just* and *Powerful* to suffer any Abuses of him to pass *unrevenged*, which all Men that understand any thing, believe of *Almighty God.* When we Promise and Vow to him, we know that he *cannot be deceived*, and that he *will not be mocked*; so that we must needs see it stands us instead, and is our highest Concern, to perform with him. And therefore, since in the Sacrament we do in the most solemn Manner vow to amend our Ways, and promise an Holy Life to Almighty God; in re-

gard none that are *Honeſt will*, and none that are *Wiſe* and *Serious dare* be unmindful of ſuch ſacred and ſolemn Compacts, *it* muſt needs be an excellent Way to bind it faſt upon our Souls, and fix it in our Minds, and ſo help very much to eſtabliſh and imprint it in us.

And thus we ſee, how a worthy Receiving conveys Grace, and confirms and increaſes in us all Virtues, by the *natural Tendency* of thoſe Duties, which it *exerciſes*, and *excites* in us. For *it powerfully excites*, and therein *we exerciſe ſeveral Duties*, which *help on a good Mind*, and *ſet it forward*, and *bind ourſelves by ſolemn Vows and Engagements to go on in it*, *both* which are moſt powerful to improve any Effect.

And as it thus confirms and increaſes in us all Graces, by the *natural* Virtue and *Tendency* of thoſe Duties, which it *excites* in us: So does it,

2*dly*, By *thoſe inward Aſſiſtances*, *which it miniſters and conveys to us.*

This Sacrament doth not only confer Grace by its *natural Tendency*, as other Means; but moreover, by virtue of *God's Promiſe* and *eſpecial Bounty* to the worthy Receivers of it, as it is an Inſtrument in his Hands. He tells us, that he will do great Things at the Preſence thereof, and be liberal in ſpiritual Bleſſings to all thoſe who duly partake in it: So that beſides what they do from the Virtues themſelves, which are exerciſed thereat, they may promiſe themſelves much ſpiritual Grace and Strength from his free Gift, and immediate Concurrence with it. For in the Holy Sacrament, he offers them all that outward Grace, and ſpiritual Strength, which Chriſt's Death procured; and therefore, if they come to it worthily, ſo as their own Unworthineſs may be no Bar againſt the ſame; that Offer will be ſure to take Effect, and

they

they ſhall undoubtedly receive it. And this is plainly intimated to us, when our *Bleſſed Saviour* tells us of his *Fleſh*, that it is *Bread*, the true Uſe and End whereof, is for * *ſupport* and *nouriſhment*, John vi. 51. And when St. *Paul* declares, that *the Cup of Bleſſing which we Bleſs, is the Communion*, or † Communicating to us *the Blood of Chriſt*, *i. e.* thoſe Benefits which his Blood procured for us: And, that the *Bread which we break is the Communion*, or Communicating to us *the Body of Chriſt*, *i. e.* thoſe Graces which the Offering of his Body obtain'd for us, amongſt ‡ which are theſe *ſpiritual Aſſiſtances*, 1 Cor. x. 16. And when our *Lord* himſelf tells us, that the *Bread* he gives us, *is his Body*, and that the *Cup* he reaches out to us, *is his Blood*, Mat. xxvi. 26, 28. By which, though he meant not that they are his Body and Blood in their *Natures*, yet the leaſt he can mean is, that they are ſo in their *Effects*; ſo that when we receive them, we receive all the Bleſſings of his *Blood-ſhedding*, and all that Grace which his Death has purchaſed for all Men.

And thus the *Church* of Chriſt has ſtill thought concerning it. ‖ *In the Sacrament*, ſays St. *Ambroſe*, *Thou receiveſt the Similitude of the Body of Chriſt*, *i. e.* the Bread and Wine which repreſent it; *but*, *together with that*, *all the Grace and Virtue which the true and real Body obtained.* § *This Sacramental Food*, ſays St. *Cyprian*, or whoſoever was the Author of that Tract, *is in outward Ap-*

* Pſal. civ. 15. † Κοινωνία. ‡ Gal. iii. 13, 14.

‖ Ideo in ſimilitudinem quidem accipis Sacramentum, ſed veræ Naturæ gratiam, virtutem que conſequeris. *Ambroſ. de Sacram.* l. 6. c. 1.

§ Sed immortalitatis alimonia datur, à communibus cibis differens, Corporalis ſubſtantiæ retinens ſpeciem, ſed virtutis Divinæ inviſibili efficientia probans adeſſe præſentiam *Cyp. de Cœna. Dom. ſub. init.*

pearance a bodily Substance; but by invisible Efficiency, it works all the Effects of a Divine Power and Presence. * *They that partake of the Eucharist by Faith,* says St. *Clement* of *Alexandria, are sanctified thereby both in Body and Soul.* And, † *We eat the Bread,* says *Origen, which by Prayer is made the Body of Christ, Holy in itself, and making those Holy who feed on it with Resolution of new Life and holy Purpose.*

And this is another Way, whereby the worthy Receiving the Holy Sacrament confirms and augments in us all spiritual Graces; *viz. As it is an Instrument in God's Hands, who, at the Presence, and in the Participation thereof, ministers and conveys them to us.*

And by this it appears, that the Holy Sacrament confirms and increases us in all Graces, both by the *natural Virtue* and *Tendency* of these Duties, which it *excites* and *improves* in us; and also by those *inward Assistances* and *spiritual Aids*, which it *ministers* and *conveys* to us.

And thus we see how the Holy Sacrament is full of Grace and a quickning Spirit, and helps mightily to set us on in an Holy Life, and in the Work of Reformation and Amendment. And therefore then, any Persons that turn *Penitents*, and resolve to lead new Lives; *one* of the *best Rules* that can be given them, is to frequent it. For it will carry them forward in their Work, and, what by the natural Tendency of the Duties themselves which are exercised in it, what by the Assistances which are conveyed by it, increase their

* Εὐχαριστία, κέκλητα, ἧς οἱ χῇ πίστιν μεταλαμβάνοντες, ἁγιάζονται καὶ σῶμα καὶ ψυχήν. *Clem. Alex. Pedag.* l. 2. c. 2. p. 151. Ed. Par.

† Ἄρτος ἐπιούσιος σῶμα γινόμενος διὰ τῆς εὐχῆς, ἄλλον τινὰ, καὶ ἁγιάζον τοῦ μεθ' ὑγιοῦς προθέσεως αὐτῷ χρωμένους. *Orig. Cont. Celsi.* l. 8. p. 399. Ed. Cant.

Strength,

Strength, and give them Power to go through therewith. It will perfect them in Obedience, by *exercising* and *exciting*, and by both *improving* in them that *Faith*, *Love*, *Thankfulness*, *Resignation*, and *Repentance*, which are the most genuine *Principle*, and effectual Cause thereof. It will bind it upon their Souls, and ingage them to it, by their *repeating*, every Time they come therein, their *solemn Vows* and *sacred Promises* to go on in it. And it will inable them to succeed in the same, by bringing down from God those *inward Helps* and *spiritual Assistances*, which shall bear them thro' it. So that if any Man begins to look towards God, and longs to go forward with the Work of Reformation and Amendment: He ought in all Reason to seek out, and press in to be admitted to the Holy Sacrament. For it is one of the best Rules that can be prescribed in his Case, and serves his End above any Thing: And therefore *he* must not in any wise shun it, but lay out for it above all Men living. A Man who will not repent, indeed, whilst he continues in that Mind, must not come to it; for he would not receive Good, but Hurt thereby. But if he resolves to amend his Ways, and seeks out for Help, and would make use of any Means which would do him most Service in effecting the same; let him be constant at the Lord's Table, and frequently Communicate. It will quicken him when once he is in the Way to become Good, and amend his Pace where he has need to be set forward, and strengthen him in those Parts where he is weak and most liable to be assaulted, as St. *Ignatius* told the *Ephesians*, when he advised them to be frequent in this Holy Feast; saying, * *Shew haste to assem-*

* Σπουδάζετε συνέρχεσθαι εἰς εὐχαριστίαν θεοῦ καὶ εἰς δόξαν· ὅταν γὰρ πυκνῶς ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ γίνεσθε, καθαιροῦνται αἱ δυνάμεις τοῦ Σατανᾶ.

ble

ble often in the Euchariſt; for the oftener you meet thereat, the more your ſtanding is ſecured, and the Power of Satan is deſtroyed. It will fortify him in all Trials, wherein he is like to be moſt endanger'd; enlivening in him that *holy Zeal*, and *ſteady Purpoſe*, and *other Graces*, which muſt bear him through the ſame: For which Cauſe, it was uſed *anciently*, and upon a like Occaſion would be ſo ſtill, as a *Preparation* for the *greateſt Trials*, and to fit Men to *die Martyrs for the Cauſe of Chriſt. Thoſe*, * ſays St. *Cyprian*, and the other *African* Biſhops, *whom we would preſerve ſafe and invulnerable againſt the fierceſt Darts of the Adverſaries, we arm firſt with the Lord's Supper, wherewith they may be guarded as with a Shield, and wherein they may be ſecured as in an impregnable Fortreſs.* It is an excellent Means of confirming every Grace, and affording ſpiritual Help and Strength to all that want it: And that is Inducement enough, were there no Command of Almighty God for it, for every Man, who deſires to be intirely good and ſtrong in Spirit, to reſort thereto.

And thus at laſt it appears, what thoſe Bleſſings are, which come by the Holy Sacrament, and which are ſufficient to ingage all good Souls to preſs to it themſelves, tho' it had no where been commanded.

In reality, all Chriſtians who are of Age for it, and have an Opportunity, and are call'd to join in it, and can ſhew no lawful Lett or Impediment of *providential Hindrances*, *Sickneſs*, or the like, which

* Quos excitamus & hortamur ad prælium, non inermes & nudos relinquamus, ſed protectione Sanguinis & Corporis Chriſti muniamus: Et cum ad hoc fiat Euchariſtia, ut poſſit accipientibus eſſe tutela, quos tutos eſſe contra adverſarium voluimus, munimento Dominicæ Saturitatis armemus. *Cyp. & alii Epiſc. in Epiſt. Synod. Eccleſ. Afric. ad Eccleſ. Roman. Ep.* 57. *Ed. Oxon.* 54. *Pamel.*

would excuse their Absence from *Prayers*, or other *Ordinances* of Jesus Christ; are bound in *Duty* to repair to the Holy Sacrament. Our Blessed Lord, as I have shew'd in the foregoing *Chapter*, has given his *express Commands therein.* And the Nature of those Things which are meant thereby, and which in that religious Feast, we are call'd to employ our Minds upon, do most straitly oblige his true and faithful Followers to the same. And after once they have been sufficiently instructed, how much it is their Duty to resort to it, and how true Repentance doth duly qualify them for this Holy Table, and make them worthy of it; if still thro' *Carelessness*, or *Impenitence*, they shall stay away from it, they *sin against God thereby*, and are guilty of a *damning Neglect*, which will not be forgiven them till they *repent* of it, and *amend* it. But if there were no *Guilt* in the *Neglect*, and to Communicate had not been thus required of them; yet would the *Blessings of the Thing itself* have ingaged all *penitent good Men, to press in to be admitted thereto:* For it is the *most effectual Course in all Religion to prevail with God*, and to *be heard in all their Prayers*; it *seals to them Pardon of their Sins, for the Peace of their Consciences*; and *confirms and augments in them all their Graces*; bringing down such Help, as may make them stand in all Trials, and carrying them on, beyond any other Means that can be prescribed for that Purpose, in the Course of Repentance and new Obedience. Which Benefits, to all that love the Ease of their own Minds, and have any Care of their own immortal Souls, are Invitation more than enough, to engage their Presence at this Ordinance: And as for those who have no Care what becomes thereof, they are neither to be won by *them*, nor by any *others.*

And thus, having shewn *what is the Meaning of eating Bread and drinking Wine in the Blessed Sacrament*, and *wherein the Worthiness of doing it lies*, and *how much it is every good Christian's Duty to frequent it*, and *what great Benefits there are that come by it, which might make us press to it of ourselves, had it not been commanded by our Blessed Lord:* I shall proceed now,

5*thly*, In the *last* Place, to *consider those Excuses*, and *to take those Pleas, which are most usually made by any Persons against coming to the same*; of which in the *next* Part.

PART III.

CHAP. I.

Two Hindrances from Communicating.

The CONTENTS.

One most general Hindrance, that keep Men from the Sacrament, is a Fear of their being unworthy and unfit to receive it. This is answer'd by shewing, 1. *The Partiality of it, because they are not so scrupulous about neglecting, as about unworthy receiving the Holy Communion, though there be the same Cause to scruple both.* 2. *That every true Penitent is worthy of it: Yea, he that has only fully purposed Amendment, though he has not had Time to perform it.* 3. *Impenitence, which unfits them for it, is no Excuse for the Neglect thereof.* 4. *Impenitent Men, who alone are unfit, if they understand the Danger of their State, cannot continue therein, but will amend it, and then they may worthily Communicate.* 2. *A* second *Hindrance is, because an unworthy Receiver eats his own Damnation,* 1 Cor. xi. 29. *which makes not Receiving seem the safer Side. By Damnation is meant,* 1. *A damning Sin, which is deadly till we repent of it; and such are both unworthy Eating, and sinful Abstaining, so that they are equal as to that Point.* 2. *Temporal Penalties, which were inflicted for their Intemperance*

perance at this Feaſt, and other Diſorders peculiar to thoſe Times, and are not now uſual in ours, ſo that the Fear of them need not diſcourage us from it.

SINCE a worthy Receiving of the Holy Sacrament is a *Duty* which our Bleſſed *Lord* has ſo *ſtraitly injoin'd*, and from which *we* may all hope to reap ſo *great Benefits*, as has been ſhew'd; it may well be expected, that all who would do Service, either to their *Saviour*, or to *themſelves*, ſhould readily join therein, whenſoever an Opportunity is offer'd for the ſame. And ſo, it is like, all who pretend to ſerious Religion would, were it not that they have ſome Exceptions in their own Minds againſt it, which till they are removed, make all Diſcourſes of the *Duty* or *Uſefulneſs* of this Holy Feaſt to fall without Effect, and perſuade them, that however *neceſſary* or *adviſeable* it may be to *others*, yet it is not ſo to *them*, who have ſo *juſt* an Hindrance to excuſe or diſcourage them from being preſent at it.

To give this Duty as faſt hold as I can, therefore, on the *Conſciences* of all thoſe who ſhall peruſe this *Treatiſe*, having already ſet forth the *indiſpenſable Obligations which we have to it*, I ſhall now proceed to *remove thoſe Hindrances, and to take off thoſe Pleas, which are offer'd to excuſe, and keep Men back from complying with it.* And as for *them*, the moſt weighty and conſiderable, which I have been able to learn, or have had Opportunity to meet withal, are ſuch as follow:

Men are moſt ordinarily hindred from the Bleſſed Sacrament, notwithſtanding it is ſo much both their *Duty* and their *Intereſt* to frequent it, by *one* or other of theſe Things.

1*ſt*, Becauſe *they think themſelves unworthy of it, and unfit to receive it.*

2*dly*, Because of *the great Danger of unworthy Communicating, Damnation being said to be eaten therein, which seems to make abstaining the safer Side.*

3*dly*, Because *therein they are to promise concerning every Sin which they find themselves guilty of, that they will no more commit it; and this Promise some dare not make, because they fear they shall not keep it.*

4*thly*, Because of *the great Difficulty which they apprehend to be in worthy receiving, and their want of Time and Leisure to prepare for it.*

5*thly*, Because *they see others, or have found themselves, to be no whit bettered or improved thereby; so that it is not worth their while to fit themselves for it.*

6*thly*, Because *they have not that Charity for all the World, which is to be profess'd in it.*

7*thly*, Because, *though they be with others, yet others are not in Charity with them; and therefore they fear they want that Peace which is required thereto.*

8*thly*, Because *it is a Presumption in us to approach it, and therefore say some, an humble Man should abstain from it.*

9*thly*, Because *many good People are seldom or never seen at it, and therefore they may be good too, and have good Company, if they keep away from it.*

10*thly*, Because *others who are unworthy of it, are admitted to join in it.*

11*thly*, And lastly, Because, *though they ought, and would come to the Holy Sacrament, yet they would not kneel, which is the Posture appointed by the Church, wherein they are to receive it.*

These are such Things as do most *ordinarily* hinder good People from partaking in this Holy Ordinance; but indeed they ought in no Case to be their Hindrance from doing their Saviour, and their own Souls this Service, as will more fully appear from treating all the *Particulars*.

1st, *One*

1ſt, *One* Thing, that is the moſt *general* Hindrance of all, and keeps back very many from the Bleſſed Sacrament, who otherwiſe are deſirous enough to partake in the ſame, is their *thinking themſelves unworthy of it, and unfit to receive it.*

Now to ſilence this Plea, and to ſatisfy the Minds of thoſe who make it, ſo as that there may be no more Cauſe for it; I ſhall obſerve theſe *four* Things:

1ſt, *They ſhew great Partiality in this Plea,* becauſe *they are not ſo ſcrupulous about neglecting the Communion, as about the unworthy Receiving of it, though there be the ſame Cauſe to ſcruple both.* They ſhew all their Niceneſs about *doing* what God bids them, but none about *letting of it alone.* They are afraid of offending in coming to the Holy Sacrament, but have no Fear of giving Offence in ſtaying away from it: As if God had only forbid them to receive unworthily, but had no where forbid them to abſent themſelves, and not receive at all.

But this, as I have already ſhewn, is a very wrong Judgment, for Almighty God doth as ſtraitly *injoin* a *worthy*, as he *forbids* an *unworthy* Communicating. He has given us his Command for it, and that too with ſuch Notes and Circumſtances abovementioned, as ſhew that he lays a particular Weight upon it, and highly expects to be obeyed therein. So that if we would not bring Guilt upon ourſelves by ſinning againſt him, we muſt make Conſcience of *not coming* to the Sacrament, as well as of *irreverent Treating* and *Prophanation* of it when we come.

This then is very *partial* and *unfair* Dealing, to be ſcrupulous only about the *Manner of performing* this Duty, but to have no Scruple at all about the *Omiſſion* of it: As if, when God commands us to *do a thing, not to do it at all,* were not as much a

Fault as *to do it wrong*; and it were not equally transgreſſed when we *neglect*, as when we *prophane* it. And if all thoſe who are full of Fear about *unworthy Receiving*, would be but as fearful of *ſinful Abſtaining*; this equal Fear on both Sides would make them diligent in ſeeking Satisfaction, and in carrying on the Work of Preparation: So that they might neither offend by *coming*, nor by *ſtaying away*, but worthily appoach to the Lord's Table, and be heartily welcome to it when they do.

2. *Every Penitent, who is reſolved to leave his Sins, and has begun the Change, is really worthy; ſo that the Thoughts of Unworthineſs ought not to put him by it.*

He is a *true Penitent, who conſiders of all God's Laws, and is reſolved, by God's Grace, to keep them; and of all his own Sins, and is reſolved, by God's Grace, to leave them: And ſo changing his former evil Courſe and Practice, becomes a new Man.* And whoſoever does this, he is a fit Perſon, and worthy to come to the Holy Communion. For all the Particulars of worthy Receiving, are Inſtances of Duty, as has been obſerv'd, and neceſſary Parts of a good Man; ſo that every Man, who turns penitent, and becomes truly and acceptably good, will be endowed with all of them. Nay, if any Man were to learn them, there would be Difficulty in any thing elſe, if *Repentance* would go down with him: So that any Perſon who ſincerely repents, may do every thing elſe which God requires him to ſhew forth in the ſame. The great Things expected of us at this Feaſt, as has been ſaid, are theſe; namely: That we *give Thanks for Chriſt's Death*, and *reſign ourſelves up to his Service*, and *repent of all our Sins*, and be in *Love and Charity with all Perſons*, and *have Faith in Chriſt and his Merits:* And all theſe are eaſy, and create no great

Difficulty

Difficulty to a penitent Perſon. For is it not an eaſy Thing for him to *thank Chriſt*, who verily believes that he *died* for him? And cannot he readily *reſign* himſelf up to his Uſe, who has already given himſelf up to an *Holy Life*, which is all the Uſe he would make of him? And is not he in *Peace* and *Charity* with all Men, who has *repented* of all his Sins, and then ſurely of *Malice* and *Unpeaceableneſs* among them? And doth not he *believe thoſe Things which his Saviour Chriſt has declared to him*, viz. That *he died for us to purchaſe Terms of Grace*; and that now, for his Sake, God will *forgive us any Sins*, when we truly *repent* of them; and *help us by his Spirit* to any *Graces*, when we carefully *endeavour* after them; and *give us eternal Life in Heaven*, when we *intirely obey* him; but that *otherwiſe*, than upon *theſe Terms*, he will not give us any of them; which are thoſe Declarations that he makes to us in the Holy *Scriptures*, and wherein he expects to be *truſted* and *believed* by us: Doth not every *penitent* Man, I ſay, *believe* all this, who is at the Pains to *live* according to it, and *repents* that he may be *pardoned*, and *endeavours* that he may be *aſſiſted*; and *obeys* that he may be *graciouſly rewarded* for it? All this *Faith*, which is required to the Communion, is *neceſſary* to *Repentance*, and is *ſhewn therein*; for we ſhould not leave *Intemperance*, *Fraud*, *Malice*, or any other Sin that is ſtrongly recommended to us, unleſs we *believed* God had *forbid* it, and would now for Chriſt's Sake *freely forgive*, and *eternally reward* thoſe who *repent* of it. And all this *Thankfulneſs*, and *Reſignation*, and *Peace*, and *Charity* towards all Men, which are likewiſe required to the ſame, are not only *eaſy after it*, but are *Parts* of it. For if we are *unthankful* for Chriſt's Benefits, or *unreſigned* to his Uſe, or out of *Charity* with any Perſons, we have

have not yet *repented* of *all* our Sins, but, as to *these* at least, are still *impenitent*. So that when once Repentance of all our Sins is, there is, or may be in us every thing else, which God requires at this Feast to fit us worthily to partake thereof.

Thus is every true *Penitent* fit to eat at the Table of his Lord, and to be a worthy Communicant. And therefore when any Persons do from their Hearts repent them of all their Sins, and are fully purposed to lead new Lives thenceforwards; let them not be afraid to come to the Holy Sacrament, for they are truly such as God accounts worthy of it. If they have not shaken Hands with their Sins, indeed, but live still in them, and are ready to repeat them on the next Occasion, they will come unworthily whilst they are in that State, and will not be made the better, but the worse for it. But if they have broke lose from them, and have been acted by God's Fear, and led new Lives for some Time; and are still putting out more Endeavours, and praying for more Grace to do this yet more perfectly: They are the Persons whom God calls to this Feast, and may justly expect to receive an hearty Welcome at it. Nay, if their Return to God has been so late, as that they have not yet had Time sufficient for *well-doing*, but only for *holy purposing* that they will do well as often as they shall have Occasion, yet, if out of a *serious Conviction* of the *Detestableness of every sinful Course*, they are *fully resolved to leave it*; and after a *due Consideration of every Part of their Duty*, they are *fully*, and *without all Reserve resolved to practise it*; I doubt not, but that this *Will* and *Purpose*, before the Time and Opportunities for *Practice* come, will render them welcome Guests, and worthy to Communicate. For whatever Rigors afterwards came in, not from the

Nature

Nature of the Sacrament itſelf, or the *Neceſſity of* the Thing, but only through the *diſcretionary Power of the Church*, and the *Rules of Diſcipline*, thus I think it is plain it did in the *Apoſtles Times*. For the *three thouſand Souls*, whom St. *Peter* converted at *one Sermon*, did not ſtay till they had Opportunities of *performing*, but were admitted that *very Day*, upon their *inward Change and Reſolution*, to the *Apoſtles Fellowſhip*, and therein to the *Holy Sacrament*, which was a Part of it. *They that gladly received his Word*, ſays St. *Luke*, *were baptized*; *and the ſame Day there were added unto them about three thouſand Souls*. *And* all theſe *continued ſtedfaſtly in the Apoſtles Doctrine and Fellowſhip*, *and in breaking of Bread*, *and in Prayers*, Act. ii. 41, 42. And when the *Apoſtles* went about to convert the *World*, they admitted Men preſently to *Baptiſm* and the *Chriſtian Worſhip*, upon their *Profeſſion of Faith in Chriſt* and being *penitent*, without ſtaying to ſee them *practiſe* what they had *promiſed*, as appears in the *Converts* now mentioned, and in the Story of the * *Eunuch*: And when they were admitted to the Chriſtian Worſhip, they were admitted to the Communion too, becauſe in the *Apoſtles* Days, as I have † ſhewn, that was an *ordinary* Part thereof, and always went along with it.

If any Perſons then have already left their Sins, and do not *willingly* allow themſelves in any of them; if they have been ſtriving long againſt them, and are daily gaining ground, and making a more perfect Conqueſt thereof: Nay, if they, who, ſince their Return to God, have not had Time to *perform* all this, are yet *fully* and *deliberately purpoſed*, and without all *Reſerve*, reſolved within

* Acts viii. 36, 37, 38.

† *Part* 1. *Chap.* 3.

themſelves

themſelves ſo to do: They are the Perſons, whom God invites to this Feaſt; they are *worthy* to come to it, and will be ſure to meet with a kind and hearty Entertainment there. *God* and *they* are fully agreed in their own Thoughts, and the Terms of Reconciliation betwixt them are conſented to on *both* Sides. For he proclaims *Mercy* upon *Repentance*, and they thankfully accept it; he offers to return into Favour with every Sinner that will amend his Faults, and they are glad of the joyful News, and fully reſolve an End to theirs. And ſince they are both agreed upon the Thing, what ſhould hinder them from coming to the Holy Sacrament, which he has appointed for this very End, that therein they may give their expreſs Conſent to this Agreement, and mutually make this Declaration.

Thus is every Man, who has left his Sins, and begun to lead a new Life, or, who is fully purpoſed in his own Mind, and abſolutely intends ſo to do; a welcome Gueſt at this Feaſt, and worthy to communicate: So that no Apprehenſions of Unworthineſs ought to put him by it.

And as for thoſe who neither have left all their Sins, nor are determined in their own Hearts, and wholly bent to leave them; they are plainly *impenitent*, and thereupon moſt unworthy to Communicate. But then,

3dly, *That Intemperance which unfits them for the Holy Sacrament, is no Excuſe at all for the Neglect of it.*

Impenitence will excuſe a Man in no Act, but is itſelf a very great Aggravation of the ſame. It is no *extenuating Plea*, but a *damning Fault*; ſo that no Man muſt ever hope to eſcape the eaſier after he has omitted any Duty, by giving it as the Reaſon for it. When God calls us to the Sacrament,

to

to promiſe him that we will amend our Faults, and lead new Lives thenceforward; if we return Anſwer, that we *come not* becauſe we are *impenitent*, that is as much as to ſay, we *come not* as he bids, becauſe we *will* not, which is certainly the worſt Plea that ever was made for any Offence, and can never render his Caſe better, but much the worſe that uſes it.

As for thoſe then, who keep away becauſe they are *impenitent*; they are left without all Plea, and have no Excuſe at all to make, for their not coming to the Holy Sacrament. The only Thing that can ſtand them in ſtead, either as to it, or as to any thing elſe, is their Repentance and Amendment; which they will not delay, if they conſider in how great Need they ſtand thereof. For,

4thly, *Impenitent Men, who are unworthy of the Holy Sacrament, if they underſtand the Danger and Miſery of their State, can by no Means continue therein, but muſt forthwith repent and amend, and then this Hindrance is gone, and they may worthily approach to it.*

If they underſtand the Danger and Miſery of their State, I ſay, *they cannot continue in it.* For ſo long as they remain impenitent in *many*, or in any *one known* Sin, they are not only unfit to *receive the Sacrament*, as I have ſhewn, but alſo to ſay *their Prayers*, to *give Thanks*, to *make Vows*, or to have any thing to do with God in any other Part of *religious Worſhip* and *Service.* They are ſhut out from all Benefits of Religion, they have no Salvation by *Chriſt*, nor any Hopes of Heaven. If they happen to die ſuddenly whilſt they are in this State, or are call'd away before the Work of Reformation is finiſh'd (as it is greatly to be fear'd they may, if they put it off for the *preſent*, and

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as in all likelihood they will, if they delay it till their *Death-bed*, at which Time it is a very rare Thing for any Man to go through therewith) they will go to *Hell*, there to be tormented with the insupportable Anguish of a *wounded Conscience*, and *unsatisfied Appetites*, and a *raging Fire*, and with all the *Terrors* and *Disconsolation of Darkness*, and the utmost Malice of *Devils* and *damned Spirits*, and the highest *Shame* and *Confusion of Face:* All which they must undergo without any *Eye to pity*, or *Friend to comfort them*, or any *one to refresh them*, or any *Abatement*, or *Intermission* for *evermore*. And this is a State of such Horror and Astonishment, as no Man, who looks upon it, can abide in: It is a Condition of such extreme Danger, as no one in his Wits can willingly endure. So that if any of those who are *impenitent*, will but be at the Pains to lay to Heart, and consider of the Sadness of their State; they can by no Means persist therein, but will run with haste to repent, and instantly set about the Amendment of their Ways, that so they may be delivered from it.

And as soon as ever they do so, this Hindrance is gone, and they are *worthy* to come to the Holy Communion. For that which *fits* us for it, is not an *high Pitch* and *Perfection in saving Virtues*, or *extatick Degrees* and *Transports in Devotion*, as I have (*Part* 1. *Chap.* 4.) *shewn*; but such *true Repentance* and Change of Life, either in *Deed*, or at least in *Will* and *Purpose*, as make us *acceptable* and *honest Christians*. So that whatever we were before, whilst we continued impenitently wicked, we are meet Partakers of this Holy Feast, now we have repented of all our wicked Ways, and are fully resolved to become obedient, and not scrupulously draw back, but may come to it gladly when we are call'd, and expect a friendly Welcome

come from our Bleſſed Lord and Saviour, when we meet him there.

And thus I have conſider'd this great, and moſt common Plea, whereby ſo many are kept back from the Holy Sacrament, *viz. their thinking themſelves unworthy of it, and unfit to receive it*; and ſhew plainly, that no *ill* Man *can be excuſed*, and that no *good* Man *ought to be hindered* thereby. And the Reſult of it is this: If any Perſon tells me he cannot come to this Holy Feaſt, becauſe he is *unworthy to join therein:* I muſt tell him again, That he *muſt not only be afraid of unworthy Coming to it, but alſo of unworthy Abſtaining from it*; and that *unleſs he is impenitent, and ſtill unreſolv'd to leave all his Sins, he is worthy to come to it*; and that if *ſuch Impenitence is the Cauſe of his not coming, it is no Excuſe for the ſame*; and that *he muſt conſider of the Danger and Miſery of that State, and ſo repent and get out of it*; and when once that is done, he will be worthy, ſince *every true Penitent is welcome* thereto. If he is *truly penitent*, he *is worthy*; and if he has not repented yet, he muſt *inſtantly repent*, that he *may be worthy:* And then let him not hold off from this heavenly Banquet, but chearfully approach to it as often as he is invited.

2*dly*, Others, who cannot poſitively ſay they are unworthy of it, are yet kept back from the Holy Sacrament, becauſe, of the *great Danger of unworthy Communicating, Damnation being ſaid to be eaten therein, which ſeems to make abſtaining from it the ſafer Side. He that eats and drinks unworthily*, ſays *St.* Paul, *eats and drinks Damnation to himſelf*, 1 Cor. xi. 29. Now in *anſwer* to this, I ſhall obſerve, 1*ſt*, That by *eating his own Damnation*, the Apoſtle means, not *that he ſhall inevitably be damn'd for it*; but only that *he commits a damning Sin, which will prove deadly to him unleſs he repent thereof:* And this

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is true, not only of *unworthy Eating*, but also of *sinful Abstaining, so that they are equal as to that Point.*

He means not, I say, *that he shall inevitably be damn'd for it.* And this is plain, because for Christ's Sake, God has promised *to forgive us all our Sins upon our true Repentance*, and therefore this of *unworthy Receiving* among the rest. Nay, as for this their *unworthy Eating*, the *Apostle* tells the *Corinthians* in that very Place, that *when they are judged*, or condemn'd for it, that Judgment, if it brings them to Repentance, is not to consign them to, but to deliver them from eternal Torments. *When we are judged*, says he, or condemned for this Offence, *i. e.* to be *sick* and *weak*, which God inflicted on them because of it, *we are* not in Anger punished, but in Mercy *chastened of the Lord*, or trained up to *Repentance* by present Sufferings, *that we should not*, at the last Day, *be condemned with the World* to eternal Misery, 1 *Cor.* xi. 30, 31.

But only *that he commits a* * *damning Sin, which will prove deadly to him, unless he repent of it. He that eats this Bread, and drinks this Cup unworthily*, says he, *shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord*, i. e. unless his Repentance, that Gospel Remedy for all Sin, prevents it, he shall be liable to be punished, not only for an Abuse in Meat and Drink, as if it were only common Food; but for violating and prophaning the Body and Blood of Christ, which he should have discerned therein. 1 *Cor.* xi. 27, 29.

And this is true, not only of *unworthy Eating*, but also of *sinful Abstaining* from the Holy Sacrament. For *that* our Lord has expressly forbidden,

* *So St.* Chrysost. *understands it.* Vid. Chrys. *in* v. 32, 34.

as

as I have ſhewn, and that too in ſuch Sort as ſhews he lays a great Weight upon it; ſo that we moſt highly offend him therein, and cannot expect to regain his Favour till we repent and amend the ſame; and therefore they are *both equal as to that Point.* We ſhall be condemned, without Amendment, for unworthy Eating, and ſo we ſhall too for ſinful Abſtaining. And therefore if the Fear of Damnation be of Force with us, it muſt keep us off from both them, and neither ſuffer us to *neglect* this Feaſt, nor to *prophane* it, but ingage us to come to it *worthily*, *i. e.* with penitent Hearts, whenſoever we are called thereto.

2*dly*, By *Damnation*, the Apoſtle means *temporal Death and Puniſhments, which God did then inflict on unworthy Communicants.* And this was not for all *Unworthineſs*, but particularly for their *Intemperance at this Feaſt, and other Diſorders which were peculiar to thoſe Times, and are not uſual now in ours: So that the Fear of them need not diſcourage us from it.*

By *Damnation*, I ſay, he means *temporal Death and Puniſhments, which God did then inflict on unworthy Communicants.* This he plainly intimates, when he ſets down *Weakneſs*, and *Sickneſs*, and *Death*, as the *Penalties* whereunto they were condemned for their unworthy Uſage. *He that eats and drinks unworthily*, ſays he, *eats and drinks Damnation to himſelf*, whereof you have many ſad Examples now in *Corinth*, for *this* very *Cauſe* of unworthy Eating, *many* now *are weak and ſickly among you, and many ſleep*, 1 Cor. xi. 29, 30.

And this God inflicted, *not for all Unworthineſs*, but *particularly* for *ſome high* and *heinous Diſorders*, ſuch as were not only their *open Schiſms*, but their *groſs Intemperance* that had crept in by Occaſion

of their *Love-Feasts*, which was a Prophanation peculiar to *those* Times, and is not now usual, or any where to be seen in *ours*.

They came to the Holy Sacrament in *open Schisms*, not eating all together when they met in the same House, but *scandalously dividing* into *factious Clans*, and *separate Tables*. *When ye come together in the Church*, and meet all *in one Place*, says the Apostle, *I hear there be* * *Schisms or Divisions among you*, or that you bandy in Parties, and do not meet all as one Body, 1 *Cor.* xi. 18, 20.

They came to it also in a most *scandalous Excess*, and *gross Intemperance*, which *Vice*, tho' so confessedly loathsome in all other Places, had yet, by Occasion of their *Love-Feasts*, crept into this most solemn Part of the Christian Worship and Service. St. *Jude* seems to charge the *Gnosticks*, those *sensual* and *luxurious* Persons, with some such Fault. *They are Spots*, says he, *in your Feasts of Charity*, *when they feast with you*, *feeding themselves without Fear*, i. e. so freely as shews they have no Fear of God, or of the Solemnity and Religion of the Feast, *Jude* 12. And so doth St. *Peter* more plainly in his Description of the *same* Men, 2 *Pet.* ii. 13. *They count it Pleasure to riot in the Day-Time*, says he, *Spots they are and Blemishes*, *sporting themselves*, *or being* † *luxurious with their own* ‡ *Deceivings*, as we read it; but in some *Manuscripts* of greatest Authority, particularly the *Alexandrian*, with which the Translation of the ‖ *vulgar Latin* agrees, it is *being luxurious in their* ⸸ *Feasts of Charity when they feast with you*, v. 13. And with a like Excess *Socrates* charges the *Egyptians* a good while afterwards.

* Σχίσματα. † Ἐντρυφῶντες. ‡ Ἐν ταῖς ἀπάταις. ‖ *It reads*, Deliciis affluentes, *not* Fraudibus. ⸸ Ἐν ταῖς ἀγάπαις.

For

For * *they*, says he, *communicate at Even, after they are full fed, and have glutted themselves at their Love-Feast with all the Varieties of a choice Banquet.* And because the *Love-Feasts* minister'd Occasion for such Excess, and made Way for several Abuses, they came, in Time, to be wholly laid aside in *Communions.* And to prevent that *Intemperance* which they had introduced, it was order'd *generally*, that Men should receive *fasting*, contrary to what our *Lord* did at *first*, which was ratified by a † *Decree* in the *third Council of Carthage*, held near 400 Years after the *Birth* of our Saviour Christ.

Now this *Intemperance*, which had crept into the *Love-Feasts*, and so mixt with the Holy Sacrament which always went along with them, was another most shameful Offence, which St. *Paul* reproved in the *Corinthian Communions.* They did not only change this *Ordinance of Union* into a *factious Meeting*, by falling into separate Gangs and Parties when they came to it: But also turned this *pure* and *holy Treat* into a *drunken Club*, and a *riotous Entertainment.* In your *eating*, says he, *every one* as he comes sooner, *takes before other his own Supper, and one*, being poor, *is hungry*, thro' the Smallness of his Provisions, *and another*, being rich, *is drunken* thro' the Excess of his, 1 *Cor.* xi. 20, 21. And upon this *schismatical* and *intemperate Eating*, he lays the Danger of that *Judgment* or *Condemnation*, which God was wont in those Days to inflict on them. *If any Man* pretend

* Μετὰ γὰρ τὸ ἐνωχλῆσαι ἑαυτοῖς ἐδεσμάτων ἐμφορεῖσθαι, ὥσπερ ἔσπερον προσφέροντες, ἢ μυστείων μεταλαμβάνουσιν. *Soc. Hist. Eccles. l. 5. c. 22. p. Ed. Val.* 287.

† Ut Sacramenta Altaris non nisi a jejunis hominibus celebrentur, excepto uno Die anniversario, quo cœna Domini celebratur. *Concil. Carth. 3. Can. 29. apud Bin. Vol. prim. Concil. p.* 711.

Hunger, says he, for this Greedineſs and Intemperance, *let him eat at home*, *that* ſo *ye come not together* at the Lord's Supper, as now ye do, *to Condemnation*, v. 34.

Now theſe *ſcandalous Irregularities*, but eſpecially this *Intemperance* at the Lord's Table, for which God was ſo ſevere upon the *Corinthians*, is no Crime in the Communicants of *our* Days, when among all the unworthy Receivers, none are ſo by Reaſon of ſuch *Exceſs*; but it was peculiar to *theirs*, when together with the Holy Sacrament, they always joined their *Love-Feaſts*, which were liable to be abuſed to *Gluttony* and *Drunkenneſs*. And when they did provoke God thereby, and, by theſe heinous *Prophanations*, which call more loudly for *Vengeance* than other common Offences, were expoſed in thoſe Days to be thus miraculouſly ſtruck with *Death and Diſeaſes*; yet was there Place ſtill to prevent theſe *temporal*, as well as the *eternal* Puniſhments for the ſame, by true *Repentance*. If they bethought themſelves in *Time*, and *judged* or *afflicted themſelves* for their wicked *Prophanation*; their hearty *Repentance* and *Humiliation* might ſtop the deſtroying *Angel* from inflicting ſudden *Death* upon them in this *World*, as well as *eternal Damnation* in the *World* to come. *If we would judge ourſelves*, ſays St. *Paul*, to theſe *Offenders* and horrible *Prophaners* of this *Holy Feaſt*, *we ſhould not be* thus *judged*, or immediately afflicted and puniſhed of the *Lord*, 1 *Cor.* xi. 31.

As for this *Damnation* then, which the *Apoſtle* charges on *unworthy Eating*, it either ſignifies a *damning Sin*, and that is true of *wilful Abſtaining* as well as of *unworthy Receiving*; or a *temporal Puniſhment* miraculouſly inflicted for their *Drunkenneſs* and *Intemperance*, wherewith at that Time

they

they polluted and prophaned this Holy Feaſt, which was a Thing peculiar to thoſe Days, and is not now derived down to ours, ſo that we have no juſt Cauſe to be deterred thereby.

Thus it is, if really we ſhould come *unworthily* to the Bleſſed Sacrament, we only commit a *damning Sin* thereby, as we ſhould do by *wilful Abſtaining*, which will be forgiven us afterwards upon the ſame Terms whereon God forgives all our other Sins, *i. e.* our *repenting* of it, and amending it. Yea, and if thereby we ſhould have provoked God to viſit us, not only with future and eternal Death, but alſo with preſent Diſeaſes and temporal Calamities; ſuch Repentance, when uſed ſeaſonably and ſincerely, will likewiſe put by, and, thro' the Merits of Chriſt, cover us from them too. But if, when we come to this Holy Table, we are truly *penitent*, and have broke off from all our evil Ways, intending fully to lead new Lives thenceforwards; then we may with Comfort aſſure ourſelves, that we are *worthy* and welcome Gueſts, and are not concerned at all in this Damnation, which is threatned to *unworthy* Communicants.

CHAP. II.

Of three other Hindrances from Receiving.

The CONTENTS.

A third *Hindrance is, becauſe therein they are to promiſe concerning every Sin, that they will no more commit it; which Promiſe ſome dare not make,*

becauſe they fear they ſhall not keep it. If this be ſufficient to hinder any Man from the Communion, it ought alſo to hinder him from Prayers, and being baptized a Chriſtian. But it muſt not hinder Men from any of them. 1. *Let them promiſe this Amendment, and keep it, and then the Doubt is anſwered. They ought to make it; and by God's Grace they may perform it, if they have a mind to it.* 2. *If after ſome Time they happen to break it in any Inſtance, they have the Benefit of Repentance afterwards.* A fourth *Hindrance, is the great Difficulty ſuppoſed to be in worthy Receiving, and Want of Time and Leiſure to prepare for it. This lies not more againſt the Holy Communion, than againſt an holy Life, and all Religion. But it muſt not put us by from any of them. For,* 1. *If it required all that Time and Pains which is ſuppoſed, that would be no Excuſe for any of us to neglect it. To true Penitents, the Time and Pains is not ſo great as is imagined. It requires more of ill Men, but leſs of good, who may prepare for it in a leſs Time. A ſtrict and particular Examination of our whole Lives is not neceſſary to be repeated every Time we come to the Holy Communion. This is not required by Almighty God, nor was it believed or practiſed by the firſt Communicants. Nor doth the Sacrament's being a Renewal of the Baptiſmal Covenant, and a Seal of Pardon, neceſſarily require the ſame. What the Neceſſity, and what the Expedience is, of theſe ſtrict Scrutinies. If they are uſed to Self-examinations, good People may prepare themſelves for the Holy Sacrament upon a few Minutes Warning.* 3. *The pooreſt and moſt imployed have Time ſufficient, if they would uſe it to that End: And where they have fewer Helps and leſs Time, the leſs Preparation is accepted of them.* A fifth

Hin-

Hindrance is, becauſe they ſee others, or have found themſelves to be no better by it; ſo that it is not worth while to fit themſelves for it. If this has any Force, it is not to be reſtrained to the Holy Sacrament, but holds ſtronger againſt Prayers, and other Parts of Worſhip. But it ought not to hinder any Perſons. For 1. *Where it is true, there is no Excuſe from it.* 2. *In all good Mens Caſe it is falſe, for they are really better by it; many by improving in their Goodneſs, and all by continuing in it, for which it is richly worth their Pains to come thereto.* 3. *Where they are not bettered at all, or not ſo much as might be expected; that is purely through their own Fault, in not uſing the Means of improving thereby: So let them amend that, and this Hindrance is removed.*

A *Third* Thing which keps back ſeveral from the Holy Sacrament, tho' both in Duty to their Saviour, and in Tenderneſs to their own Souls, they are moſt ſtraitly bound to frequent the ſame, is becauſe *therein they are to promiſe concerning every Sin which they find themſelves guilty of, that they will no more commit it; and this Promiſe they dare not make, becauſe they fear they ſhall not keep it.*

Now as for theſe Perſons, I would deſire them to conſider, that if this be a ſufficient Hindrance to keep them from this Ordinance, it is equally ſo to keep them from their *Prayers*, nay, from their very *Baptiſm*, and being enrolled *Chriſtians:* For God will not hear their *Prayers* for the *Pardon of any Sin*, till they *repent* of it, and reſolve within themſelves, and make him faithful Promiſes that they will never more commit the ſame. Nor did he admit them to *Baptiſm*, to be liſted

Members of his Church, till they had *renounced the Devil and all his Works*, with *all the ſinful Luſts of the Fleſh*, and *promiſed to keep his holy Will and Commandments, and walk in the ſame all the Days of their Lives.* If we ſtick at theſe Promiſes, then we muſt ſcruple ſaying our Prayers, and boggle at all Religion, and if we were yet *unbaptized*, upon this Account we ſhould refuſe our Baptiſm, ſince therein we *did*, and *ought* to make as large and expreſs Promiſes of leaving all our Sins, as we *can*, or are *required* to make in the *Holy Communion.*

But to thoſe who are afraid of the Holy Sacrament upon this Account, I have theſe two Things to add.

1. *Promiſe this Amendment, and keep it, and then the Doubt is anſwered.*

2. Though *after ſome Time they ſhould forget themſelves, and break it in ſome Inſtances, yet ſtill they have the Benefit of Repentance afterwards.*

1*ſt.* I would adviſe them to *promiſe this Amendment, and to keep it, and the Doubt is anſwered.* When the Objection againſt *Promiſing* is only the Danger of *Performing*, when they both *can* and *ought* to perform it; it is an *Objection* that lies only againſt *themſelves*, in a Suſpicion that they will be wanting to their own bounden Duty and Service: And that is better removed, by their own Care faithfully to diſcharge it, than by any thing that I can ſay to it. They *ought to perform it*, and *if they will, by God's Grace, they may do it*; and therefore let them be careful to do that, and this Difficulty is at an End.

They ought, I ſay, *to perform this Amendment which they promiſe to Almighty God*, to leave every Sin which they have formerly committed. God will not forgive us any wilful Offences, whilſt we perſiſt

perſiſt *impenitent*, and continue to repeat them; but requires firſt, on *our* Part, that we forſake and amend the ſame. *Sin no more*, ſays our Saviour to the *Woman taken in Adultery*, and then *will not I condemn thee*, John viii. 4, 11. And *let the wicked* Man *forſake his Ways*, ſays God by *Iſaiah*, *and return unto the Lord*, *and* then *he will have Mercy upon him*, *and abundantly pardon*, Iſa. v. 7. It is no indifferent Matter that is left to our own Choice, whether we will leave our Sins, or no; but the Thing muſt of Neceſſity be done, if ever we hope to appeaſe God, or to go to Heaven. So that we muſt not be leſs forward to promiſe, for that is our Duty, but more careful to perform.

And as they *ought* to perform this Amendment, which they promiſe to Almighty God, ſo by *his Grace* they *may* perform it, if they *will*, and have a Mind to do ſo. When at this Feaſt, they ſay that they *will* never commit *this* or *that* Sin any more, according as God has required, they ſay not that they will never be *ſurprized* into it, but that they will never act it *wilfully*, *i. e.* when they ſee it, and are aware thereof; or, if at any Time they do fall into it again, that they will not *perſiſt* therein, but *amend* it, *Repentance* always going along and being implied from the *Beginning* to the *End* of the *Goſpel Covenant*. And this by *God's Help* they all may do, if they make it their ſerious Buſineſs, and lay out their utmoſt Care and Pains upon it. For when a Man's *Conſcience* tells him, that the Thing is ſinful which he is about to act, or at leaſt he could readily ſee it, if he would direct his Eye thereto; he need not go on therewith, unleſs he will, but, if he pleaſe, may inſtantly turn away from it. This, I ſay, he may do; for if he will not be wanting to himſelf, God will not be

be wanting to him therein, but inable him effectually to abſtain from the ſame when he truly endeavours ſo to do. If once we are careful to *work out our own Salvation*; St. *Paul* aſſures us that *he will work in us both to will and to do*, Phil. ii. 12, 13. *To him that hath*, i. e. imploys what he hath, our Saviour promiſes that *more ſhall be given*, Mat. xxv. 29. And elſewhere again, *God will give the holy Spirit to thoſe that aſk him*, Luke xi. 13.

And ſince by God's Grace they *may* perform this Amendment if they will, and *ought* to perform it, if ever they hope he ſhould accept them; let them but be careful ſo to do, and then this Hindrance will give them no more Trouble, but be quite removed. They will have no cauſe to be ſlow to promiſe what they will be thus honeſtly careful to perform.

2. Though *afterwards they ſhould forget themſelves, and break this Promiſe in ſome Inſtance; yet is not their Caſe deſperate thereupon, but they have ſtill the Benefit of Repentance for that Breach of Promiſe afterwards.*

Indeed, if they break it as ſoon as ever they have made it, and run *conſtant Changes* in *ſinning* and *repenting*, performing this Time, and tranſgreſſing it the next; that Repentance, I doubt, will be of no Avail with God, becauſe it reſts only in *fair Words* and *Promiſes*, or, at beſt, in ſome *faint Attempts*, without any *real Reformation* and *Amendment*. Nay, if they fall a ſecond Time into ſome Sins, which *lay waſte the Conſcience*, ſuch as *Murder*, *Adultery*, *wilful Perjury*, and the like, which few good Men can ever incur at firſt, and which fewer can afterwards *repeat*, when once they have ſmarted for the ſame: It may ſtill give Cauſe, why the Sufficiency of their Re-

Repentance ſhould be queſtioned. But if in Sins which are more ordinarily incurr'd, as *Diſcontent*, *Pride*, *Revenge*, *Back-biting*, *Paſſion*, &c. which are generally meant by thoſe who are kept back by this Impediment; if after they have promiſed to leave *theſe* Sins, I ſay, they go on for ſome due Time to make good their Word, and avoid the Offence in ſeveral Opportunities which lead them to repeat the ſame; but at laſt they happen to forget themſelves, and break it in ſome Inſtance; yet doth not that *null* their former Repentance, or make their Caſe deſperate thereupon; but they have ſtill the *Benefit of Repentance afterwards*, for that Breach both of Duty and Promiſe; and, by amending what they have done amiſs, may be perfectly reſtored and made whole again. For God will pardon us upon our true Repentance, not only *once*, or a *ſecond* Time, but as *often* as there is Occaſion. So that if after we have promiſed in the Holy Sacrament, that we will never more be guilty of any particular Sin, we yet happen to yield to it at length, and are anew overcome: Let us but truly repent of that Breach, and fully reſolve againſt it a ſecond Time, and then we are made whole as we were in our former Station.

As for this Hindrance then, whereby ſome are kept back from the Holy Sacrament, *viz.* Their *promiſing therein concerning every Sin, that they will no more commit it, which Promiſe they dare not make, becauſe they are afraid they ſhall not keep it:* It need not ſtick with them, nor ought to hinder any Man who pretends to Religion. For let them promiſe *this Amendment*, and keep it, and then the *Doubt is anſwered.* Or if, after they have kept it for ſome Time, they happen to fail *upon ſome Occaſion*; let them repent of that

Breach,

Breach, and make new Promiſes, and faithful *Reſolutions*, and then they are whole again. And all this has nothing in it that *can be avoided*, or *ought to be feared*, but is all *neceſſary* and *deſirable* to be done: For it is their Duty thus to promiſe, and their Duty to perform, and their great Privilege, that, if they fail in any Inſtance afterwards, yet ſtill upon repeating their *Repentance*, they ſhall receive a *Pardon*. It is what every Man muſt do, not only to be a worthy *Communicant*, but to be a *Chriſtian*. For the ſame Things are promiſed in *Prayer*, and in *holy Baptiſm*: So that if any Man draw back from them, and ſticks to promiſe them; he muſt not pray to God, nor pretend to Religion, nor, were he to chuſe again, would he be *baptized* into the Chriſtian Profeſſion.

4. A *fourth* Thing which keeps back ſeveral from the Holy Sacrament, is the *great Difficulty which they apprehend to be in a worthy Receiving of it, and their Want of Time and Leiſure to prepare for it.* They fancy it is a very hard Thing for any Man to Communicate worthily; and ſince it is *hard*, it muſt needs require much *Time* and *Application* to prepare themſelves for it: and as for their Parts, they have little *Leiſure* from their *Buſineſs*, and are not made to *maſter Difficulties*; ſo that they muſt be content, and hope they ſhall be excuſed if they abſtain from it.

This *Objection* many are ready to make againſt coming to the Holy Communion. But every Chriſtian will be much aſhamed of it, and ſlow to urge it a *ſecond* Time, when once he conſiders, that it lies not more againſt it, than againſt an *Holy Life*, and *all Religion*. For all the Particulars of worthy Communicating, as I have ſhewn, are equally Parts of indiſpenſable Duty, and a good Man,

Man. God has required no more *Virtues* in us at the *Time of Receiving*, than he requires of *us at all other Times*, to render us *acceptable Christians*, to fit us to say our *Prayers*, or to give us any *Hopes* of *Eternal Happiness*. So that if any Man says, that the Work of the Holy Sacrament is *over hard*, and therefore that he is *not willing*, or *wants Time* to fit himself for Receiving; he may as well say, that he is *not willing*, or *wants Time* to be a *Christian*, or to go *Heaven*, and upon that Plea may with equal Reason bid adieu to all *Religion*.

But to answer this more particularly; I must observe to them,

1. *That if the worthy Reception of the Holy Sacrament did really require all this Time and Pains to prepare for it which is supposed, yet will that be no sufficient Reason or Excuse for any of us to neglect it.* For when God bids us do a Thing, can any Man think it a good Excuse to say, *I would do it, if it were not troublesome, or long a doing.* Must we perform those Things only at his Command, which are easy, and soon over; but neglect all others, which imploy more Care and Pains, and require to be attended longer? How we may like such *Masters*, I will not say, but I am sure God will entertain no such *Servants*, as will pick and chuse with his Commandments, and obey them no further than their own *Ease* and *Occasions* will suffer them. No, he expects we should do him Service, tho' it be with Difficulty and Loss to our own selves. And this in all Reason *he* may very well require of *us*, because we ourselves, who can plead no such *Deserts* as he can, nor make any such *Recompences* as he proposes, do all look for it from our Servants, in any Business which they are to do for *us*. For if we set them to any Work, we should think it a very odd Answer, if they tell us that they would do it for us,

us, but that they are unwilling to be at *so much Pains*, or to spare *so much Time* as it requires.

Although a worthy Communicating then would require much Time and Pains to prepare for it, yet would not that be a just Excuse for any Person to neglect it. For since God *commands* it, nay, *commands it urgently*, and lays a great Weight upon it; we are bound in all Duty to perform it, tho' it cost us both *Time* and *Pains* so to do But,

2. *To all true Penitents it is not so difficult, nor requires so much Time as is imagin'd; so that they have not so much as this Discouragement to make them backward in it.*

The Difficulty of worthy Receiving lies not in *giving Christ Thanks, or believing the Holy Scripture* and all its Promises, as I have shewn; but only in *Repenting of all our Sins.* And this, indeed, *has more Difficulty in it, and requires more Time to ill Men who are held Captives by their Sins; but not very much to good Men, who are already set free, and have broke off from them.*

1. *I say, Repenting of all their Sins, and Amendment of their Lives, has more Difficulty in it, and requires more Time to ill Men.* For they have many Lusts to pare off, which are very dear to them; and many Things to set straight, which cannot all be done upon the sudden, when they come to enter upon a good Life, who as yet are Strangers to it; they must *consider particularly* of *all God's Laws*, which are the Rule thereof, and *examine* their own Hearts at *every one*, to see against which of them they have *offended*, and there make their *particular Purposes*, and *full Resolutions of Amendment.* They must spend *Time* and *Pains* upon this *Examination*, to bring themselves to a *penitent Purpose*, and a *deliberate well-weighed Resolution:* And when that is done, it will cost them more Time

Time and Pains ſtill in *frequent Trials*, as in the Courſe of Life and Buſineſs they meet with Opportunities, to *practiſe* and *perform* what they have reſolved upon. For when upon a ſtrict Review of their whole Lives, they find they have ſeveral Sins to amend; they muſt not think, after they have reſolved againſt them, to get perfectly quit of them on the *ſudden*. But they muſt withſtand the Temptations to them *once* and *again*, and paſs thro' frequent Trials, and exerciſe themſelves in many Conflicts, before they will have got the Conqueſt, and be indeed reformed from them.

Thus will it require both much Time and Pains for an ill Man to become good, and not only to *reſolve* that he will amend all his evil Ways, but to put in *practice* and *perform* it too.

'Tis true, indeed, I cannot ſay that the *actual Amendment* of every Fault, and the *Performance* as well as *Purpoſe* of obeying in every Commandment, is neceſſary to a *worthy Communicant*. For a *full Reſolution* of Amendment, without ſtaying for Time and Opportunities to fulfil the ſame, is ſufficient to fit us for this Feaſt; as I have obſerved it did in the *Apoſtle*'s *Days*, when, upon their firſt Converſion and becoming penitent, before they had Time to perform what they had promiſed, Men were admitted to the Holy Sacrament, as they were to other Parts of Worſhip. So that the Repentance requir'd of us to a worthy Communion, will not take up all that Time, which is neceſſary to amend a whole Life, and to practiſe all the Duties of a good Man.

But although it will not call for all that Time, which is neceſſary to a *New Life* and *Practice*; yet will it require all that Time which is neceſſary to beget and actuate a *New Heart* and *Purpoſe*; and that will be much more in *ill Men*, than it will

will be in *Good.* For when ill Men examine themſelves, to find out all their Sins, that they may reſolve againſt them; they have many *more Sins* to repent of, and to employ their Minds upon; and are more *Strangers* to their *own Hearts* and *Lives*, having never obſerved or looked into them, and ſo need the greater *Labour of Recollection*; and have more *Hardneſs of Heart* and *Coldneſs of Spirit*, ſo that they do not ſo eaſily *renounce* them, nor can ſo *readily* and *fully reſolve* againſt them, when they have diſcover'd them, as good Men can.

As for this Repentance of all their Sins then, which conſiſts not in an *actual Amendment* of them, but in *full Purpoſes* and *Reſolutions* never more to commit the ſame, which is ſufficient to a worthy Communion; It has more *Difficulty* in it, and requires more *Time* than *ordinary* to *ill Men, who are held Captives by them.* But,

2. *It doth not require very much to good Men, who are ſet free and have broke off from them.*

The great Thing which they have to do, is, to examine what their Offences are, and to find out their own Miſcarriages; for if once they do *diſcover* them, they are ſo *habitually* ſet to amend every thing that is amiſs, that they will quickly reſolve againſt them. And this Diſcovery they will make much *eaſier* and *ſooner* than ill Men can. For their Offences being fewer in Number, are ſooner run over; and their Conſciences being tender, and uſed to obſerve them, they do better remember them, and are the readier, when they are aſked, to give in an Information of them, than the others are. Indeed, if they do not accuſtom themſelves to *Self-Examinations*, they will find more to do, and need a longer Time, when they come to them. But if they are much verſed therein, eſpecially if they take daily an Account of

of the *Day paſt every Evening*; having daily diſcovered and acknowledged all their Offences, they will bear them ſtill in Mind, and have an habitual Senſe of them; and ſo be able at any time to tell what Acts they are to promiſe and reſolve upon, at a few Minutes Warning; as we may well ſuppoſe they did in the firſt Times, when they Communicated *every Day*, and, under the *preſſing Wants* and *Diſtractions* which they conflicted with, could not ſet apart *whole Hours* for Preparation.

And here under this Head, I think fit to take Notice of their Miſtake, who think *a ſtrict and ſolemn Examination after every known Sin, which they have at any time been guilty of, and a particular Confeſſion and Repentance for the ſame, to be one neceſſary Part of their Preparation every Time they come to the Holy Communion.* Whereas indeed, the Work and Need of Self-Examination, which is to make them ſee their own Ways, is not one and the ſame to all Perſons, nor to the ſame Perſons at all Times; but ought in Degree to be either more or leſs, according as they who uſe it are already more or leſs acquainted with themſelves.

But as for this ſtrict Review and Examination of our whole Lives before every Sacrament, where doth God require it? St. *Paul*, it is true, bids Men *Examine themſelves, and ſo eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup*, 1 *Cor.* xi. 28. But this Rule doth only require, that this Work of Self-examination be finiſhed ſome time or other before we come to the Holy Table; but it doth not preſcribe how often. It doth not ſay, that he muſt examine himſelf again To-day, who had done it with Care Yeſterday; or that he muſt renew the ſame ſtrict Search on every Return of the Holy Sacrament, which he did at the firſt time of his receiving it. And the Apoſtle ſpeaks it here, to

warn againſt their Neglect, who eat and had never duly examined themſelves, either about the myſterious Nature and Purpoſes of this Heavenly Food, or about their own Fitneſs to partake thereof: As thoſe *Corinthians* had never done, who came to eat the Lord's Supper, as a common Meal, not at all *diſcerning the Lord's Body* there; for which God puniſhed them with *Sickneſs* and ſometimes with *Death* itſelf, *ver.* 29, 30.

And as for the Belief and Practice of the *Primitive Communicants*, ſuch particular Survey and Confeſſion of all the Sins of their whole Lives, was not held for a Part of Mens neceſſary Preparation for the Holy Sacrament in their Times. They made ſuch Searches and Enumerations of Sins for the Holy Communion, as they did for their Prayers, in their Holy Aſſemblies; and whatever they might do at ſometimes, yet it cannot be made appear, that at all times, or even ordinarily, they did more. For the Communion was not ſeparated from the ordinary Service in thoſe Days, as, God knows, it has been ſince, thro' the Indevotion of later Ages, but always made a Part thereof, for all thoſe to join in who came to join in the Church's Prayers. Yea, even the *Holy Apoſtles* themſelves, ſo far as we can judge from that Account which the Scripture gives us thereof, were not put upon any ſuch ſtrict Search and particular Examination of themſelves to prepare for the ſame, when they received it at our Lord's Hands; nor the *Jeruſalem* Chriſtians afterwards, when they received the ſame at theirs. For they receiving the Holy Communion, as St. *Luke* ſays, *Acts* ii. 42. *every Day*; and being Perſons of indigent Fortunes, who for the moſt part had little Leiſure to retire from their daily Labours, ſuch ſolemn ſtated Examinations, and tedious Reſearches every Day, would

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ill comport, as I noted before, with their Circumſtances.

In the Holy Sacrament, it is true, we are to renew the Baptiſmal Covenant with Almighty God. And to renew this Covenant worthily, it is requiſite that we underſtand, both what the Covenant itſelf is, and what our own Performances or Violations thereof have been. But this we may know ſufficiently, without having Recourſe to ſuch exact and particular Examinations every Time we renew the ſame. When by Means of ſuch careful Reviews we have once got this Knowledge, it may ſtick by us; and by Uſe, we ſhall come to be habitually acquainted, both with the Terms of God's Holy Covenant, and with our ownſelves. And beſides, good Minds do not love to run long upon the Score in their Accounts of theſe Matters, but are wont to keep up this Knowledge, and to revive their Acquaintance with theſe Things, by taking new Reviews thereof at convenient Times; yea, they are daily imprinting the ſame upon themſelves by their daily Recollections. So that when they are call'd to a Renewal of this Covenant in the Holy Communion, they need not always to make theſe exact Inquiries, like Perſons who as yet are wholly ignorant and unacquainted with God's Holy Covenant, and with themſelves; which were to make themſelves very unprofitable Learners, who are ever learning theſe Things, but never attain to any Knowledge of them. But the fixed and habitual Knowledge which they have of theſe Matters, may ſerve them upon Occaſion, to renew it in this Holy Feaſt, as I have ſhewn it ſerved the Holy Apoſtles and Primitive Chriſtians; and as it ordinarily ſerves themſelves to renew the ſame in their Prayers and penitential Devotions.

The Holy Sacrament likewise, is to *seal to us the Remission of our Sins.* And till we have particularly repented of all our Sins, especially of all wilful ones, we are not fit for the Seals and Assurances of God's Pardon of the same. But what follows upon this, is only that we inquire after them, and repent of them one time or other, before we come to the Holy Communion. But tho' this must be done once, it is not necessary that it be always a doing: And when Sinners have once thus repented and renounced their Sins in the Particulars, they may come to God afterwards, either to seek his Pardon, or to receive his Assurances thereof, in more general Confessions. And thus we daily come to seek his Pardon in our Lord's Prayer, where we pray in general that God would *forgive us our Trespasses*; and in the Form of *Confession* in the daily Service of the Church, which rests in Generals, and descends not to Particulars. And so we do likewise to receive his Assurances thereof, as in the Church's *Form of Absolution*, which in the daily Service is pronounced upon a general Confession of our Sins. And as the *Jews* did also in their Sacrifices of Expiation, which sealed and assured Remission of Sins to them, as the Holy Sacrament doth to us; and wherein, tho' the Sin for which the Sacrifice was more especially offered, was mentioned by Name, yet as for all the rest of their Sins, they were confessed to God in a general Form.

Indeed, as for this solemn and strict Scrutiny, and particular Review and Examination of the several Parts and important Passages of our Lives; when it is managed carefully and discreetly, it is of great Use in the Way of Piety. It is highly fitting, and next to necessary in all grown Persons, at one Time or other; both that they may fully and universally repent them of all their Sins, (for a particular

particular Search must discover to them all those particular Offences, which they need to bewail and repent of) and also when they do repent, that they may know they do it, and have the Comfort thereof: And this Necessity, to the Fulness, and likewise to the Comforts of Repentance, is both the Ground and Measure of its Necessity both to Prayer and Sacraments, and other Religious Acts; it being so far only necessary in them all, as Repentance is, and as without it Men cannot be either compleat or comfortable Penitents.

But when once this End has been duly served thereby, and it has been used at any Time to perfect Repentance, as often as we have fallen into any Sins which need to be particularly repented of; there is an End, I think, of its Necessity, and that which calls for it afterwards, at particular Seasons or Ordinances, as at Sacraments or on Humiliation Days, is not strict Duty and Necessity, but Usefulness and Expedience.

And very useful and expedient it is, for Improvement both of the Holiness, and of the Peace and Comfort of Religious Spirits, where it can be had conveniently, and whilst neither their Lives are too much burdened with it, nor their Consciences are insnared by it. And as such a grand Expedient of a Holy Life, I think it very adviseable for all *young Converts* to acquaint them thoroughly with all the Particulars, both of God's Will and of their own Weakness; and that by this Means, having a clear Prospect of all before, they may not either be surprized or beat back, by any Emergencies or After-Accidents. It is also very adviseable in all grown Christians at some *certain Times*, which they will chuse for themselves, according as Discretion, animated by the Love of Godliness, shall direct them, and which they will make more or

leſs frequent in their Returns, according to the Degree of their Zeal for Holineſs, and of their Leiſure for theſe Exerciſes, and according as they feel themſelves more or leſs to ſtand in need thereof, or to receive Benefit thereby. But it ſeems more particularly adviſeable and fitting on Days of Faſting and Humiliation, and at the Holy Communion. For what Time more proper to examine into all the great Paſſages and Particulars of our Lives, than when we are going ſolemnly to treat with Almighty God about them, and to ſeek Reconciliation with him for all our evil Deeds, which are paſt, and to ingage that they ſhall all be mended for the Time to come.

But then as for this Adviſeableneſs thereof at the Holy Communion, that is not to be underſtood, but when, being aware of the Sacrament before, there is Time to prepare for the ſame by ſuch ſolemn Examination. And likewiſe when Sacraments ſucceed each other at ſo conſiderable a Diſtance, as may make a Need thereof; the Knowledge of ourſelves which had been gain'd by former Examinations, being in part worn off thro' Length of Time, or much new Matter being ſtor'd up for another Review. But when Communions come ſo near together, that it is eaſy to remember what we had diſcover'd before, and little new Matter has occurr'd, but what may ſoon be inquir'd after; it is moſt adviſeable, I think, for moſt Perſons, eſpecially for thoſe who complain of the Burden of theſe particular Reſearches, to proceed on the Stock of their former Examinations, however to do ſo ſeveral Times; and to run over all again, would not yield Benefit enough many Times, to recompence the Burden and Trouble which it brings along with it.

I have thought fit to ſay thus much upon theſe ſtrict

ſtrict and ſolemn Scrutinies and Examinations of ourſelves, eſpecially before the Holy Sacrament. And to ſhew both their Neceſſity to true Repentance, and when that End is ſerved, both their further Expediency, and withal our own Liberty, as Occaſion requires, in uſing or omitting thereof, or in examining ourſelves, ſometimes by more exact and full, and at other times by more compendious and defective Catalogues of Duties. And this, I hope, may be ſufficient to cure and remove their Miſtake, who *conceive ſuch exact Reſearches to be neceſſary before every Sacrament*; which I have taken the more Pains to rectify, becauſe it has much prevailed over ſome very good Minds, and greatly incumbred them. And they have been unhappily miſlead thereinto by ſome leſs wary and ungarded Expreſſions, which they ſometimes meet withal in Books of Devotions; which, whilſt they do very profitably preſcribe theſe ſtrict Examinations, as they do other Things, as wiſe Directions and prudential Means and Helps of Piety, have not always been equally mindful to let their Readers know, that they are no neceſſary Laws thereof: Which laſt is found by Experience to be no leſs needful, for preventing their proving a Snare to Conſcience, than the other is profitable for the wiſe Promotion and Advancement of good Life.

And thus, I think, it may appear, that the Work of *Preparation for the Holy Communion*, is not ſo difficult to true Penitents, nor requiring ſo much Time of them, as ſome have imagined. It may coſt them ſome Time, whilſt they employ their Thoughts, in actuating their *Love* and *Thankfulneſs*, and *other Graces*, before they come. But if they have but little Leiſure for it, this need not be long a doing. For moſt *good* Minds are ſo *inclined* and *habituated* to theſe Tempers, that they

can expreſs them, and that too, anſwerable to the Degree of Warmth which their Complexion allows of in other Things, with *Fervor* and *Intention*, upon any Warning. But the great Work, which may ſeem to have *Length* and *Trouble* in it, is *Repentance of all their Sins*; and this will not be either *long* or *troubleſome* to them. For the only thing that will give them Trouble in it, is, the Work of *Self-Examination*, to find out what their Sins have been; their Hearts being ſo good, that they can quickly reſolve againſt them, when once they have diſcovered them; yea, indeed, being habitually ſet againſt all already. And this Work of *Self-Examination*, they will not find tedious, having uſed to look into their own Ways, and thereby got to be pretty well acquainted with themſelves. Indeed, if they have not been uſed to frequent Examinations, ſo as to have all their Sins at hand before them, it may hold them a longer Time; but if they have examined *often*, eſpecially if they have reviewed and acknowledged every *Night* their *every Day's* Tranſgreſſions, they will be able to do it at a few Minutes Warning. So that if they ſhould happen at any Time to be *ſurprized* with a Communion, which it is not decent for any good Chriſtian to flinch from, tho' all would deſire a more ſolemn Preparation where they have Time for it, yet can they fit themſelves for it in that Strait, and know what Sins to reſolve againſt upon a few Moments Recollection.

But beſides that *it would be no ſufficient Excuſe to any Perſon to neglect the Holy Sacrament, though it requir'd all that Time and Pains which is ſuppoſed*; and that *to all true Penitents it is not ſo tedious, or difficult as ſome have imagined, ſo that they have not ſo much as this Diſcouragement to make them backward in it*: I proceed now,

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3. To ſhew that *all*, *even the pooreſt and moſt imployed*, *have Time ſufficient*, *if they will uſe it to that End*; *and that of thoſe who have leſs Leiſure and Opportunities*, *ſo as that they cannot fit themſelves for the ſame in great Degrees*, *God expects the leſs Preparation*, *and accepts it at their Hands.*

All Men, I ſay, *even the pooreſt and moſt imployed*, *have Time ſufficient to prepare themſelves for the Holy Communion*, *if they would uſe it to that End.*

That which makes them apprehend they have no Time for it, is a Perſuaſion, that *all Preparation muſt be carried on in the Cloſet*, when they are ſequeſtred from all *wordly Affairs*, and have ſet themſelves apart for *Devotion*, and *religious Meditations.* And for doing this, they who are *full of Buſineſs*, who muſt *labour* all the Day long, till they have quite tired themſelves, for *Maintenance*, or whoſe Time is not at their *own Diſpoſal*, but at the *Will of others*, complain that they have no Leiſure, or vacant Time to ſpare.

But now, beſides that no Perſons muſt pretend they can find no Time for *ſet Devotions*, and *ſeparate Thoughts*, ſince the moſt employed of all can find it ſome Times to throw away on *Vanity* and *Diverſions:* This Conceit, *That all Preparation ought to be carried on in the Cloſet*, is a Miſtake; for, when any Perſons are ſo minded, it may go on whilſt they are *held at Work*, and *ingaged* in the *Courſe of their Employment.* For the great Buſineſs of Preparation, as has been ſhewn, lies in *examining our own Hearts*, to find out what our Sins have been, and in *reſolving* particularly againſt them. And this a Man may carry on in any Place, where he has Liberty for Thought and Recollection. He may call to mind his own Ways, as he is on a Journey, or buſy at his Work;

Work; for Thought is free at all Times, and every Man may consider and reflect whensoever he has a Mind to it. And so long as he can find Time for this, he has Time enough to prepare himself, let his *Condition* be as *dependant*, or his *Time* as much *taken up*, as it will.

And as for those *who have less Leisure and Opportunities, so as that they cannot fit themselves for this Holy Feast in great Degrees, God expects the less Preparation*, I say, *and accepts it at their Hands.*

Thus much he expects of every Man, and that all *may*, and it is fit they *should* perform, *viz.* That (unless they are duly acquainted with themselves before, so as to know without much Examination what they have to resolve upon) *they do examine themselves about those Things which they know are sinful, and, wheresoever they find themselves guilty, resolve stedfastly to do so no more, and humbly ask his Pardon; and that they have an affectionate thankful Sense of Christ's Death, and of all that he has done for them.* But as for the *Degrees* of these Duties, how *high* they shall be in their *Detestation of every Sin*, how *ardent* in their Acts of *Resignation*, how *passionate* in their *Love* and *thankful Affection*; tho' he is well pleased with it where he finds it, yet he exacts not the *utmost Height*, as I have observed *, in those who are fitter for it; nor looks for more in any, than that every Man return according to the Opportunities which he has given him. Some have *naturally* much *Flame*, and *great Vehemence* in all their *Passions*, and much *Time* in their own Hands, and much *Help* from *good* and *inlivening Books*, or great *Quickness of Wit and Parts*, which can rea-

* Part I. Chap. iv.

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dily and advantageously represent to their own Minds the *Motives* to these Dispositions; and these Persons are able to imprint an *higher Measure* of them, and affect their own Hearts more *deeply* with them, than others of *cooler Tempers*, and *less Leisure*, and *fewer Helps*, and *slower Understandings*, can ever hope to do. But when Men have *less Time* and *Abilities* for them, God expects the *less Perfection* and *Degrees of* them. For in these Cases, his Rule is this: *Unto whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required*; *and to whom Men have committed much, of him they will ask the more*, Luke xii. 48.

And thus I have consider'd this *fourth Hindrance*, and shewn that the Difficulty *of the Thing*, or the *Want of Time*, can be no *just Reason* or *Excuse* to keep any Man from *Receiving*. And the *Sum* of what I have suggested in this Business, is this: *If it required all that Time and Pains which is supposed*, that is no *sufficient Ground for any Person to neglect it*; because when God *commands* us to do a Thing, as he has done most strictly in this Case, we must be willing to spend both *Time* and *Pains* upon it. But in Reality, it is neither *so painful* nor *tedious to good Men*, as is *ordinarily imagined*. It costs more, indeed, to *ill Men*, because they have *more Sins to examine* after, and *more Backwardness to resolve* against them; but this Expence of Time and Pains they must not impute to the *Communion*, but to an *holy Life* and *Regeneration*, which, whether they communicate or no, if they love their own Souls, they must labour and manfully endeavour in. But as for *good Men*, their great Work is *Self-Examination*, it being an easy Thing for them to resolve against any Sins when once they see them; and this will not be long or tedious to them: Nay, if they have

have been uſed to examine *often*, and to call themſelves to an Account *every Evening*, if Neceſſity ſo requires, it may be diſpatched at a *few Minutes* Warning. It is a Thing which *all Men*, even the *Poor* and *moſt Imployed*, *may find Time for*, yea, when there is Need thereof, without *hindering* or *neglecting any other Affair*, *if they are careful to uſe it to that End*; and when they have *leſs Leiſure* and *Abilities*, ſo as that they cannot *fit themſelves* in *great Degrees*, there God expects the *leſs Preparation*, and *accepts it* at their Hands. To communicate, is a moſt *neceſſary Duty*, which *will not be excuſed*; and a moſt *equitable* and *eaſy* one, which *need not to be declined*; ſo that no Pretence of *Hardſhip*, or of *Want of Time*, ought ever to be urged, or can ever be allowed to put us by it.

5. A *fifth* Thing, which hinders ſeveral from the Holy Sacrament, and makes them careleſly to neglect it, is, becauſe *they ſee others*, *or have found themſelves to be no whit bettered or improved thereby*; *ſo that it is not worth their while to fit themſelves for it.*

This is a Plea, which ſome, who are pretty conſtant in *other Ordinances*, are wont to make for their great Neglect of *this*. But if there be any Weight in it, they are much to blame in reſtraining it to the *Sacrament*, ſince it would hold much ſtronger for their *not coming to Prayers*, or the *publick Aſſemblies*, or *other Parts of Worſhip*. For theſe ſame Perſons that make this Complaint, of being little bettered or improved by *it*; could ſay the ſame of *them* too if they had a Mind. For they are much more frequent in *reading the Scriptures*, in *ſaying their Prayers*, in *hearing Sermons*, and in joining in all *other* Parts of Worſhip at the *publick Aſſemblies*, than they are at this Ordinance;

dinance; so that if they are no ways better'd under the *Means of Grace*, that *Unfruitfulness* ought least of all to be charged upon the *Sacrament*; for alas! it is but very seldom they are seen at it, but much more upon *praying to God*, and *hearing the Word*, and *other Parts of Worship*. And therefore if Unfruitfulness under any Ordinance be a Reason, not of using *greater Care* therein, that they may get *Profit* by it, but of a *negligent Abstaining* from it; they are to blame in confining it to the *Communion*, since it would serve much more to excuse them from *Prayers*, and *Sermons*, and all *other* Parts of *Worship* and *Devotions*.

But that none may be hindered by this Pretence from coming to this Holy Feast, I shall lay before them these Things following:

1. *Where it is true that they are no better by the Holy Sacrament, there is no Excuse for their Neglect of it.* And this is plain, because we are bound to communicate, not only in *Interest*, so as that whensoever that ceases, we might be free to do other wise; but in *Duty* too, our Lord having most expressly injoin'd and requir'd it of us. Had we nothing but our *own Benefit* to engage us to it, then indeed, it would be a good Reason not to trouble ourselves with it, when we found we were no better by it. But God has made it our *Duty* to come, as we have seen, by an *express* and *indispensable Commandment:* And when there is God's *Law* and *Precept* in the Case, it is an ill Excuse for any Man who neglects the Sacrament, to say he did so, because he could not hope to be a *Gainer* by it. If we refuse to do what he bids us, when it brings in no Advantage to ourselves, we cast off his Service, and begin to be acted by other Principles; we do as good as tell him, that we will do all Things out of *Interest*, and with

with an Eye to our *own Profit*, but nothing for *his Pleasure*, and in Obedience to his holy Commandment; which is as much as to say, we will only *serve ourselves*, but not *serve him* at all.

2. *In all good Mens Case it is false, for they are really made better by the Holy Sacrament.*

They are not better, perhaps, in what they *expect*, because their Expectations are not right, but they look for such Benefits from the Sacrament, as God never intended them thereby; nay, such, it may be, as in this World he never means to convey to them, either by *it*, or by any *other* Instrument. And thus it is, when Men hope, after they have communicated, to be *filled with sensible Joys and Transports*, to be *absolutely assured of God's special Love and Kindness*, to be *freed thenceforward from all further Fears and Doubtings*, to have a *Removal of some troublesome Temptations*, to *get quit of evil Thoughts and Desires, and the very first Motions to ill Things*, of all *Dullness*, and *Distraction in their Devotions*, of all *sinful Surprizes and involuntary Escapes*, and such like. These are Benefits, which, although God out of his *abundant Grace* and *Indulgence may sometimes allow to us*, yet he has no where *promised us*, nor sees always *fit for us*; nay, some of them in this Estate do *not agree to us*, being Exemptions from such *Infirmities* as are *inseparable from our Natures:* And therefore, when we come to the Sacrament, they are not to be expected from the same. They are not of the Number of those Blessings which are inseparably made over to it, or of those Effects which are always wrought by it; so that we have no Reason to complain of its being a barren and unfruitful Ordinance, because they are with-held from us.

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But although they are not benefited in *these* Respects, yet are they in *others*, which make it richly worth their while to fit themselves for this Feast, and are an abundant Recompence for all the Pains it costs them. For, besides the *quieting of their Consciences*, though not with an *absolute Assurance*, (a Pitch of Hope that is very *rarely* found in any, even of the *best* Persons) yet with a very *comfortable Sense of God's Love* and *Friendship*; which is an Effect it will have in those good Minds, who consider that therein they confirm'd the New Covenant with God, wherein he promised them Pardon if they would repent, and they profess'd to do it: Besides this Effect, I say, of *quieting their Consciences*, it benefits them further in their *Graces and virtuous Endowments*. For, though some of them fear they are not, yet in reality *all good Men are made better by the Holy Sacrament, some by improving, and all by continuing in their Goodness, which they ought to ascribe thereto.*

1. *Some good Men*, I say, (and those, I hope, the greatest Part) *are better'd in the Holy Sacrament, by an Improvement of those Graces which they bring along with them:* They *thank Christ more freely, and love him more affectionately*, and are *resign'd to him more intirely*, and *watch against* those *Temptations* which were wont to win most upon them *more carefully* after every Receiving, than they did before. It *spurs* them on, where their Pace was *slackned*; and makes them *more mindful* of any Duty, when they had forgot it; and *brings them back* to it, when they had *strayed* from the same; and makes them *circumspect* to discharge it, when they had been more *remiss* and *careless* thereof. It helps *Husbands* to be more *tender* and *affectionate*; *Wives* to be more *dutiful* and *observant*

obſervant; *Children* to be more *reſpectful*, *towardly*, *and obedient*; *Servants* to be more *faithful* and *diligent*; and *all Men* to be more concerned to *honour God*, to be more *humble* and *temperate*, *true* and *faithful*, *juſt* and *charitable*, *meek* and *peaceable*, than they were before they partook of it. All theſe virtuous Tempers and Diſpoſitions, as there is Need of them, and they can *attend* and *apply their Minds* to them, are quickened and ſet on thereby. And tho' this holy Flame, which was kindled in their Minds at the Altar, will burn dim, and grow cool again; and this religious Bent of Heart will ſlaken and be more remiſs in Time: Yet being afreſh enlivened and intended by a new Approach to this holy Feaſt, the former *Ardours* will be revived, and the ſame Bent eſtabliſhed, and ſo they will be always advancing forward in a continual Improvement.

This Increaſe of their Graces, and Augmentation of all virtuous Diſpoſitions, eſpecially of thoſe wherein they are moſt defective, the Sacrament works in *many* good Perſons, and it is very fit it ſhould do it in *all*. And altho' I dare not ſay they are *unworthy* of it, or *unbetter'd* and *unfruitful* under the ſame; yet I will ſay they are very much *wanting to their own Souls*, who are not careful to carry on, and attain this Improvement thereby. And if they examine their own Growth in Grace and Goodneſs, by a Growth in theſe Points; I believe the greateſt Part of careful and devout Receivers will find that they are really made more perfect, and improved in Virtue by frequenting the Holy Sacrament.

Yea, I add further, they may be thus improved thereby, tho', upon *Examination*, they themſelves ſhould not be able to point out, determinately, in *what*, or make a *clear Diſcovery* thereof. For very

very few Perſons do ſo ſtrictly *obſerve the Degrees* of their own Attainments in any Virtues, with what *Eaſe* they do them, and how ſeldom they ſin againſt them, as may inable them to compare exactly the Pitch of their *preſent* Graces, with the Pitch of the *ſame* Graces ſome Time *afterwards*. And if they ſhould very narrowly obſerve them, yet would they not be able nicely to judge of every *ſmall Increaſe*. For *little* Things are no more diſcernable in *Grace*, than they are in *Nature*, nor can be eaſier ſeen in *growing Virtues*, than in a *growing Man*, or *Tree*, or other *natural* Improvements. And beſides, ſince the Grace which the Sacrament is to improve in us, is ſo *diffuſed*, and extends to ſo *many* Inſtances; when really we have gained and advanced *therein*, yet may it be hard for us to recollect, and ſhew determinately in *what*, and ſpecify it in the *Particulars*. It is ſo I am ſure in *Knowledge*, which is another Thing wherein the Inſtances are ſo *infinitely numerous*. For altho' it be very plain, that the longer any Man lives, the more *ordinarily* he underſtands and improves in Knowledge, yet if moſt of us were aſked how much we are wiſer *now*, than we were a *Month* or *two Months* ſince, it might often puzzle us to anſwer it, and, tho' it be plain *we are improved*, to *particularize in what*, as well as it is to *particularize our Improvements by the Holy Sacrament*. So that not only thoſe good Men, whoſe Growth is apparent; but alſo ſeveral others, who have not particularly diſcovered the ſame, are bettered in communicating, by an *Improvement of thoſe Graces which they brought along with them thereto*.

But if any good Men are not bettered in the Bleſſed Sacrament, by *improving*, yet are they all,

2. By *continuing in their Goodneſs, which they muſt aſcribe to it, and for which it is moſt richly worth their Pains to frequent it.*

It is one great Grace and Benefit to all good Men, that they can maintain their preſent Station in Goodneſs, and not relapſe, and fall back again into their former Sins. Their *natural Luſts* are only *kept under*, not *quite extinguiſhed* in them, and will grow bold, and ſtrive for Maſtery upon any fair Occaſion. And they are daily in the Way of *manifold Temptations*, which awaken them, and give more Strength and Advantage to them. And they are many Times either *wearied* out with *Watchings*, or *lull'd aſleep* in *ſecure Careleſneſs*, which makes them liable to become a Prey to them. They are cloſely beſet with powerful Enemies, and much indanger'd by continual Temptations, and oft-times unguarded, and fit to make but a very weak Defence; which are Things that would hinder them from *ſtanding* where they are, as well as from *improving* and going farther. So that it is a very great Benefit, and they are much the better by it, if any Thing can help them to keep what Grace they have got already, as well as inable them to gain more. This *Continuance* in Goodneſs is leſs, indeed, than *Improvement*; but yet it is a moſt valuable Thing, and of ſo great Account, that, were there nothing more to be had thereby, for its Sake alone it were moſt richly worth any Man's While to come to the Holy Sacrament.

And this Benefit, which all good Men hold, ſince they would ceaſe to be good, ſhould they fall from it, all *worthy Receivers* ought to aſcribe as much to the *Communion*, as to any *other* Thing. They owe it not to *it alone*, indeed, but to *other* Means alſo, *viz.* to *hearing* and *reading the Word*, and

and *meditating* upon it, which puts them in Mind of their Duty, and of the great Motives thereto; to *Self-Examination*, which ſhews them their Falls and Deviations from it; to *ſolemn Vows* and *Promiſes*, which bind them to be careful therein; and to *fervent faithful Prayers*, which bring down God's Grace and Spirit that inables them to perform it. All *theſe*, and *others*, are great Means of ſecuring their ſtanding in an holy Courſe, amidſt all their Temptations to depart from the ſame; and therefore to every one of them they muſt in Part aſcribe it. But the Sacrament contributes to it as much, at leaſt, if not more than any Thing beſides; ſo that in accounting whence they receive this great Benefit, it ought not in any wiſe to be excluded. For therein they *remember* and *fix in Mind the Death of Chriſt*, which is the higheſt *Motive* to this Continuance in Goodneſs; and exerciſe that *Faith*, and *Love*, and *Thankfulneſs*, and *Reſignation*, and *Repentance*, which are the beſt Means to ſet it forward; and make God *ſolemn Vows* and *Promiſes*, which are the ſtraiteſt *Bond* to ingage and faſten it upon themſelves; and put up many *fervent Prayers*, which are the beſt Courſe for the Security and Maintenance thereof; and to receive thoſe *inward Graces* and *Aſſiſtances*, as I have ſhewn, which *inable* them to ſtand faſt therein. So that when worthy Communicants continue, after the Holy Sacrament, to hold their preſent Pitch of Goodneſs, and do not ſlide back again into their former Sins; they muſt not ſay they are no better by it, for this Benefit *of ſtanding in a good State*, they do receive from thence. Tho' it doth not improve and bring them *forward*, yet it helps mightily to continue and keep them where they *are*.

Thus are all good People really bettered by the Bleſſed Sacrament. For beſides the *Peace of Conſcience*, which is thereby much ſettled in thoſe Penitents, who underſtand and conſider that therein they have ſealed the Covenant of Pardon with Almighty God: Beſides this Effect, I ſay, in thoſe who rightly underſtand it; the *Graces of ſome are much improved*, and the *ſtanding of all is greatly maintained thereby*, which laſt, were there no other Expectation from it, is a moſt valuable Benefit, and ſuch, wherefore it is highly worth any Man's Labour to frequent it.

3. *Where they are not bettered at all by the Holy Sacrament, or not ſo much as might be expected, that is purely through their own Fault, and they muſt amend it.*

Where they are not bettered at all by the Holy Sacrament, I ſay, *or not ſo much as might be expected, that is purely through their own Fault.* If they examine their own Hearts about it, they will find, that they have been wanting in thoſe Things which ſhould have made it a lively Means and Help to their Improvement. It may be, after they have felt in their own Souls that they have *renounced all evil Ways*, which might fit them for this Holy Feaſt; they do not yet perceive any *affecting Peace of Mind*, and comfortable Senſe of the Love of God to be thereby wrought in them. But then that is, becauſe they do not *conſider*, how therein they confirmed a *League of Love*, and received Aſſurance of his Favour to the Penitent. Perhaps they are not *improved* in an *holy Life*, nor prevail more againſt their Sins, after Receiving; but then that is, becauſe they themſelves are *wanting* in thoſe Things which are neceſſary to ſuch Improvement. They did not *enquire what their particular Sins* were, and *deliberately reſolve* againſt them,

them, *before* they came to the Holy Table; nor are careful to *bear in Mind* what they have promiſed, and to *watch the Opportunities of performing* it, *after* they have been there. Had theſe Things been done, and this Care been ſhewn, both *before* and *after* the Communion; they may be aſſured, as I have ſhewn both from the *Virtue of God's Promiſe*, and from the *Nature of the Thing*, that they would have been the better by it. But when theſe Means are not uſed, but omitted, they cannot expect it ſhould have its due Effect, in making them obedient, which otherwiſe it would have had. For the Sacrament helps us to grow in Grace and Goodneſs, as a *moral Means*, which works only in *Concurrence with our own Care*, but not *without* it. It makes us *leave our Sins*, by ingaging us to *examine* after them, and *particularly to reſolve* againſt them, and to *ſtrive*, as the Opportunities come for repeating the ſame, to get quit of them; and by bringing down ſuch *gracious Aſſiſtances* to us, as will ſerve our Turn when we carefully endeavour therewith. But if we will be wanting to ourſelves in theſe *Self-Examinations*, and *particular Reſolutions*, and *After-Care*, and *good Endeavours*; then can it do us no Good, becauſe we will not ſuffer it: And therefore, as we were before, ſo we ſhall continue, the ſame unreformed and unimproved Perſons ſtill.

Thus is the Want of being bettered by the Bleſſed Sacrament, either *at all*, or *ſo much* as might be expected, altogether our *own* Fault. Namely, becauſe we come not to it with that *particular Sight* and *Conſideration* of *all our Sins*, and *Reſolution* againſt them, nor are afterwards ſo *mindful* of our Reſolutions, nor ſhew that Care in *performing* what we have *reſolved*, which we ought, and which are all neceſſary to our *Amendment*:

Nor have that *Consideration* of its being a *Sealing of the Covenant of Peace* and *Reconciliation*, which is as necessary to our reaping any *Comfort* and *Peace of Mind from* it. So that whensoever we fail of that Benefit which should accrue thereby, it is purely through our own Neglect, and we must thank ourselves for it.

And since this Want of being bettered is wholly our *own Fault*, let all those who are kept back thereby, take Care to *amend* that, and then this Objection is answer'd. When they receive no Benefit from the Holy Sacrament, they themselves are to be blamed, for omitting those Things which are necessary to make it benefit them; and if they will take Care to use them the next Time, they will feel more Benefit and Comfort therein. So that this Hindrance lasts no longer than they are pleased it should, and when they will, it need be no Hindrance to them at all.

As for those then, who urge this for their not coming to the Holy Sacrament, *viz. Their not being bettered or improved thereby:* My Answer to them in *Sum* is this. If there be any Force in it, it will hold much stronger for their not coming to *Prayers*, or to the *publick Assemblies*, and ought not so much to hinder them from *this Feast*, as from all *other* Parts of *Worship*. But indeed it is no just Hindrance, nor is there sufficient Excuse at all from it. Where it is *true*, there is no *fair Excuse* in it; because we are not only bound in *Interest*, but in *strict Duty* also, to communicate. But in the Case of all *good* Men it is false, for they are really *better* by the Sacrament, tho' perhaps they do not *think* or *understand* themselves to be so. For it either *improves them in their Goodness*, as it is highly fit it should and will do all, who are not wanting to themselves; or

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at leaſt it *keeps* and *continues* them in the ſame, which, where there is nothing more, is of itſelf moſt richly worth all the Pains which they beſtow upon it. And where they are not better'd at all, or not ſo much as might be expected; that is purely their *own Fault*, and will hinder them no longer than they have a Mind it ſhould; for when they pleaſe, they may amend it. If they are *good* Men, they are *better* by the Holy Sacrament; and if they are *ill*, their being no better doth not *excuſe their Neglect* thereof; and they may be better'd the *next* Time, if they will take that *Care* which is neceſſary to it: So that this ought not in any wiſe to be an Hindrance, and keep them from it.

CHAP. III.

Of Want of CHARITY.

The CONTENTS.

A Sixth *Hindrance is, a Fear leſt they want that Charity, particularly towards Enemies, and thoſe who have given them Provocations, which is required to it. An Account what Love is, and what is not due to ſuch Perſons.* 1. *We are bound to ſhew them all the Offices of Charity, which are due to our Neighbour at large, or to all Perſons. This Love contains in it all the particular Offices of Juſtice, Charity, and Peace, which are due to all Mankind. It is tranſgreſſed by all the oppoſite Inſtances; but by nothing more than hard and uncandid Cenſures and Suſpicions. The*

Commonneſs and Sinfulneſs of this Carriage. The Want of this Charity unfits Men for this Feaſt; but ſo it doth for Prayers, and all other religious Worſhip. 2. *We are not bound to ſhew them all the Offices of ſpecial Eſteem, Truſt, and Confidence, which are not fit to be placed on all Men, but on ſuch only as are qualified for them. When they ſufficiently ſhew Repentance of their Fault, they are to be re-admitted to the ſame State of Favour and Friendſhip. We muſt be candid in judging when their Repentance is ſufficiently evidenced. An humble Confeſſion is ordinarily a ſufficient Proof of it for the firſt Fault; but not when it has been oft repeated.* Luke xvii. 4. *which ſeems to affirm it, anſwer'd. Several Caſes clear'd, which are ſometimes thought by pious Souls to be a Breach of Charity towards Enemies, but in Reality are not. As, not forgetting Injuries or Unkindneſſes, but ſtill retaining a Remembrance of them: Thinking the worſe of thoſe who offer'd them: Being troubled at the Sight of them, as that puts them in Mind of the great Loſſes which they have ſuſtained by them: Shewing more Reſerve, and carrying a greater Diſtance in converſing with them, than with other Men. Theſe are no Breach of Charity towards them, nor can be a juſt Hindrance from the Communion.*

A *Sixth* Hindrance which keeps back ſeveral from this Holy Feaſt, is, their *Fear leſt they want that Charity which is required to a worthy Participation thereof.* They have ſome *profeſs'd Enemies*, that own Hatred and a miſchievous Inclination in all their Carriage; or ſome falſe *Friends* and *Confidents*, who, tho' not out of *Malice*, yet to ſerve a *particular Turn* or *Intereſt*, have proved very unfaithful or injurious; or ſome

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imprudent and *unwiſe Dependants*, who, when they meant well, perhaps, have done Things very diſadvantageous and diſpleaſing to them in their Buſineſs. From the *Malice of ſome*, or the *Falſeneſs of others*, or the *Folly of a third* Sort, they have received thoſe Provocations, which they cannot yet caſt out of their Minds; and when they remember them, they feel their Hearts are much eſtranged from thoſe who offer'd them; and whilſt they are ſo, they fear they love them not as they ought, nor have that Charity towards Enemies and injurious Perſons, which God requires in all worthy Communicants.

And this Want of *Charity* for *Enemies* and *offenſive* Perſons, is urged, not only by thoſe, who either *do*, or *wiſh* ill to them; who, indeed, have juſt Cauſe to ſay they want it: But alſo by others, who are not guilty of either of theſe towards their Enemies, and therefore have no ſufficient Cauſe at all to ſay ſo. For many good People who requite no Injuries to thoſe who have provoked them, but ſhew them all thoſe Inſtances of *Juſtice*, *Charity*, and *Peace*, which God requires of us towards *all Men*, and which are all that is due *to them*, are yet afraid that they have not ſo much Charity for them as the Law enjoins, becauſe they *ſtill remember their Injuries* or *Unkindneſſes*, or *think the worſe of their Perſons*, or *keep a greater Diſtance from them in their Carriage*, or *forbear to uſe them*, as formerly they did, *in the Quality of particular Friends and Confidents*, or with-hold ſome other *ſpecial Favours*, which are not really due to them, nor make any Breach at all of that Charity, which they ought to have for them.

This is a great Cauſe of *Scruple* to many honeſt Minds, who are really troubled therewith; and parti-

particularly it is a moſt common *Hindrance* from the Holy Sacrament; there being no Duty, I think, which the Generality of Men believe to be more indiſpenſably requir'd in every worthy Communicant, than *Peace* and *Charity*. And therefore, that they who *want* this Love of Enemies, which unfits them for this Heavenly Feaſt, may quickly ſet about the Attainment thereof; and that they who *have* it, may not be troubled, or held back from Receiving as if they had it not; I ſhall here endeavour to give a plain State of this Point, and ſhew, both *what is*, and *what is not* implyed in this Duty. And this I ſhall do in theſe two Particulars:

1. *We are bound to ſhew our Enemies*, and all others who have *provoked* us, *all the Offices of general Charity, or all that Love which is due to our Neighbour at large, and to all other Perſons.* So that whilſt we allow ourſelves in the *Breach* of *this*, we are *unfit* for this Holy Feaſt, and muſt inſtantly *amend*, that we may be fitted for it. But,

2. *We are not bound to ſhew them all the Offices of ſpecial Eſteem, Truſt, and Confidence, which are not fit to be placed promiſcuouſly on all Men, but on ſuch only as are qualified for them.* So that when we fail only in *theſe*, we are in no *Fault*, nor have any Need to be *troubled*, or *kept back* thereby.

1. I ſay, *we are bound to ſhew our Enemies*, and any others, who, by their *unkind*, *indiſcreet*, or *injurious* Carriage have *provoked* us, *all the Offices of general Charity*; or *all that Love which is due to our Neighbour at large, and to all other Perſons.* So that if we allow ourſelves in the Breach of *it*, we are unfit for this Holy Feaſt, and muſt inſtantly amend, that we may be fitted for it.

We are bound to ſhew them all the Offices of general Charity, or to treat them with *all that Love*, *which*

which is due to our Neighbour at large, and *to all other Persons.*

How hardly soever they might be treated either among *Jews* or *Gentiles*, yet in *Christianity* our *Enemies* are *Neighbours* and *Brethren*, and ought to share in all that Love, which God requires of us towards the promiscuous Multitude of other Men. For it takes off all that *Hatred* and *spiteful Resentment*, which would exclude them from all good Offices; and sets them in the Rank of *Neighbours*, whom God commands us to treat with all those Instances of Kindness, wherein consists the *loving our Neighbour as ourselves.* This is plain, from its not permitting us to *hate them*, as the *Jewish Law did*, but strictly enjoining us *to love our Enemies*, Mat. v. 44, 45. For where *Love* is, it naturally issues out in all these Duties, as there is Occasion for them; upon which Account, it is call'd the *Fulfilling of the Law*, *i. e.* of that Part thereof which concerns us towards Men, because *working no Ill*, as St. *Paul* says, *to our Neighbour*, it will keep us from any Breach of those Laws which respect them, *Rom.* xiii. 9, 10. Besides that our Enemies are to share in all that Love which is due to our Neighbours, our Saviour plainly declares, when he singles out a most *bitter Enemy*, and sets him forth as the *Neighbour* whom the Law mentions, making the *Samaritan* a Neighbour, even to a *Jewish* Man, between whom was the most inveterate and inbred Enmity and Opposition. For when the *Lawyer* asked him, *Who is my Neighbour?* he tells him by the *Parable* of a *Jewish Man*, who being left *wounded by the Thieves*, found *a Neighbour* of the *Good Samaritan*, that it is any one he meets withal, though a *Stranger*, though an *Enemy*; yea, though of a *Party* and *Profession in Religion* most *odious* unto his,

his, which ordinarily cauſes the higheſt and moſt implacable Enmities, as it did between the *Jews* and *Samaritans*, who ſtood at ſo great a Diſtance, as that they would not *give or ask* ſo much as *a Cup of Water* of each other, or have any Sort of Intercourſe together, *John* iv. 9. This was his Neighbour, ſays he, and ſo muſt thou be in a like Caſe, *Go, and do ſo likewiſe*, Luke x. ver. 29, *to* 38.

Thus are all we Chriſtians bound to hold our Enemies, and thoſe who have provoked us, in the ſame promiſcuous Rank with all other Perſons; and notwithſtanding all their Unkindneſſes, or injurious Carriage, to look upon them as our Neighbours, whom we are to love as we do ourſelves.

And that Love contains in it all the *particular* Offices of *Juſtice*, *Charity*, and *Peace*, which we owe to *Mankind at large*, even to all Perſons.

1. It contains in it all the Duties of *Juſtice*; as namely, that we be *true* to them in all our *Speeches*, and *faithful* in all our *Promiſes*, and *juſt* and *equal* in all our *Dealings*, never *ſeizing*, *hurting*, or *detaining* any thing which belongs to them; nor any ways *perverting*, *obſtructing*, or *infringing* any Right, becauſe it is theirs.

2. All the Duties of *Charity*, as that we *honour* them for their *Virtues*, and *pity* them in their *Miſeries*, and *relieve* them in their *Wants*; and, when they will take it, *reprove* them for their *Faults*, not *paſſionately* and *publickly* (which ſhews not any *Love* for them, but our *Wrath* and Spleen againſt them) but with great *Friendſhip* and *Privacy*; that we *congratulate* with them in their *Joys*, and *conceal* their *Defects*, and *vindicate* their *injured Reputations*, when we ſee them loaded with falſe Aſperſions; that we be *courteous* and *condeſcenſive*, *meek*

meek and *gentle* in our *Carriage* towards them; *candid* in putting a good Interpretation upon all their *Words* and *Actions*, especially such as relate to our *own selves*; *placable* or *easy* to be intreated after any *Offences*, and apt to *forgive* and *requite* them with *soft Speech*, *fair Carriage*, *good Offices*, and the like.

3. All the Duties of *Peace* in maintaining *Unity* and *Quietness*, as far as lies in us, and avoiding all *Strife* and *Variance*, *Clamour* and *Brawling* with them, as with all Mankind.

All these, as I have * elsewhere particularly shewn are such Duties, as we owe to our *Neighbour at large*, even to *all Men*; and then to our *Enemies* among them, since in Christianity they are *Brethren* and *Neighbours* too, and have a Claim to the same. And these, *Love* and *Brotherly Kindness*, when once they are seated in us, will be sure to effect, and make us pay to them. *For he that loveth another*, as St. *Paul* saith, *hath fulfill'd the Law. Because this, Thou shalt not commit Adultery; Thou shalt not Kill; Thou shalt not Steal; Thou shalt not bear false Witness; Thou shalt not Covet: And if their be any other Commandment.* i. e. respecting others, *it is briefly comprehended in this saying, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no Ill to his Neighbour, therefore Love is the fulfilling of the Law*, Rom. xiii. 8, 9, 10.

And since we are bound to love our *Enemies*, in paying them all this *Justice*, *Charity* and *Peace*, which I have mentioned as due to *all Persons:* It is plain that we fail of our bounden Duty therein, whensoever we act against it in any of these *Particulars.*

1. We fail of it, if at any Time we do any *Wrong*, or shew any Acts of *Injustice* towards

* Meas. *of* Christ. Obed. *B.* 2.

them.

them. As if we *falsify* and *lie* to them, or *break* our *Faith* and *Promise* with them, or *raise Calumnies*, or *report false* and *slanderous Stories* of them, or *bear false Witness* against them, or *wrongfully withhold* what is there Due, or *oppress*, *cozen*, or *defraud* them, or *take away* their *Lives*, or *maim* their Bodies, either by *secret Arts*, or *open Fight*, or *Assassination*, or the like.

2. We fail of it, if in any Instances we shew ourselves *uncharitable*, or *break* the *Peace* with them. As when we *envy* and *repine* at their *Good*, or *rejoice* at their *Hurt*, or *suffer false Stains* to *stick* upon them without any *Vindication*, when it is in our Power and in our Way to wipe them off; or when we *speak* all the *Ill* we know of them, and *back-bite* and *revile* them, especially if we do it with *Aggravation*, *Triumph*, and *Scorn*, when any Fall of theirs has given us an Occasion for so doing, or, when we *openly upbraid* them with our *Kindnesses*, or *reproach* them with their *own Sins*, or *mock* and *deride* them with their *Infirmities*, or *affront* them in our *Carriage*, or are *passionate*, and burst out into *Bitterness* and *Brawling*, *Strife* and *Debate* with them, upon any Provocation; or when we are *unthankfully forgetful* of their *former Favours*, or *implacable* after their *Injuries*, or *thirst* after *Revenge*, and are *hasty* to *punish*, or *rigorous* in *Exactions*, or such like,

All *these* are a Breach of that Love and Duty, which we ought to bear towards our Enemies, in common with all other Persons, as might be proved, were there any Need of it, of *every one* of the Particulars. And by reason they have deserv'd Ill of us, and have given us great Provocations; unless we are very circumspect, and keep a strict Guard upon ourselves, in all our Discourses and Carriage towards them, we shall be in great Danger to incur them more or less. But

But among all the Inſtances of Uncharitableneſs to our Enemies, there is none whereto we are more obnoxious, and againſt which we ought to watch with greater Carefulneſs, as we tender the Safety of our own Souls, than raſh and *hard Cenſures* and *Suſpicions*, or *fancying the worſt Deſigns*, and *putting the worſt Interpretations* upon all their *Words* and *Actions*, when they come before us.

This, God knows, is a moſt *general* and *reigning* Sin among *all Adverſaries*, and is daily ſeen, not only among the *notoriouſly ill* and *irreligious*, but alſo among thoſe, who are otherwiſe very *ſober* and *devoutly ſerious*. For even the Generality of Men, when the Actions of their Enemies come to be ſcann'd before them, are very apt to turn them into an ill Senſe, and to make the moſt of them to their Prejudice, and judge of them, not as indifferent and unconcern'd Perſons, but as they who are deſirous and induſtrious to find Faults, and to pick out ſomething which they may accuſe in them.

And this has been every where done, not only againſt *particular Perſons*, but, on all Hands, againſt *whole Bodies* and *Parties* of Men, who, in any thing relating to the Times, are of different Perſuaſions, and either *think* or *act* not after their *Projects* and *Opinions*. For how apt have, not only *private* Men been in the Caſe of particular Quarrels, but many alſo in the Heat, and at the Top of *all Parties*, in the Judging of their Oppoſites, to miſtruſt *ill* Deſigns even in their *good* Actions; and to impute all their ill ones to *unmixt Malice*, without making any Allowances of *Forgetfulneſs*, *Over-ſight*, *impetuous Heat*, or other human Frailties; to take every thing by the *wrong* Handle, and where it *might*, and *would* bear a *good* Senſe, were there any Love to conſtrue it,

to

to fix upon it an *ill* one, and to interpret it to their Diſadvantage. In arguing upon all their Words and Actions, they ſuck'd out nothing but the Venom, and turn'd every thing into a Sore about them, and were ſtrangely raſh in beſtowing *opprobrious* and *ill* Names upon them, and laid about them at that rate, as if they fancied they could not exceed, either in *thinking* or in *ſpeaking* Evil of them. In all which, inſtead of being checked with any Remorſe for it, their *Conſciences* rather countenanc'd and incourag'd it. For ſince, as they apprehended, the Cauſe which they contended for, was good in their *own Party*, and bad in the *Party* that *oppoſed* it: This Carriage they call'd not *Wrath* and *Spite*, but *Zeal*, and thought accordingly that God would own and accept it.

But this is a very *ſinful* and *unchriſtian* Carriage. It is utterly contrary to the *Love of Enemies*; for Love is always inclinable to think the beſt, and leans, ſo far as the Thing will bear, to the Side of Favour, both in *judging* and *ſpeaking* of all their Actions. It is plainly contrary to our *Lord's Rule*, who warns us *not to judge, that we be not judged. i. e.* not to be forward in paſſing Sentence againſt others, that God may not paſs Sentence againſt us; *for with what Meaſure we mete*, in judging of their Actions, *he will mete out to us again*, Mat. vii. 1, 2. It is a direct Breach of that *Charity*, which St. *Paul* deſcribes, and makes of abſolute Neceſſity to our immortal Happineſs. For *Charity*, ſays he, *thinks* or ſurmiſes *no Evil*, it *believes all Things*, ſo far as in any Reaſon it may, to other Mens Advantage. And *without* this *Charity*, though we have the *ſprightlieſt Zeal* for the beſt Parties, nay, *though* we *give our Bodies to be burnt* as Martyrs, *it profits* us *nothing*, *i. e.* towards God's Acceptance, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 3, 5, 7. Since it

is

is a *Zeal* which is not *peaceable* as well *as pure*, since it is not *full of Mercy* and *good Fruits*, but issues out in a *bitter* and *invenom'd* Spirit, which turns all Things to the worst, and is bent in all Points to the Hurt of those who fall under it: It is plain it can never come from *God*, who being *Mercy* and *Love* itself, can never be Author of so much *Cruelty* and *Hatred*; but must be ascribed to our own *Lusts*, and to the *infernal Spirits*, as its true Parents and Abettors. And this St. *James* expressly says of that *bitter Zeal*, which takes not a tender *Heart*, and *Bowels of Love* or *Charity* along with it. If it were that *from above*, saith he, *it* would first indeed *be pure*, but then it would next be *peaceable*, *gentle*, *easy to be intreated*, *full of Mercy and good Fruits*. If God kindled it, since he is Love itself, and requires us to love our Enemies as ourselves, these first Fruits of Love and Mercy would be sure to accompany it. But if all these are shut out, and it dwells in an hurtful and imbitter'd Spirit; if that be a *bitter Envying* or * *Zeal* that dwells *in your Hearts*, then, adds he, *glory not* in the same; *for this descends not from above*, so as to have God for the Author of it, *but is sensual*, *i. e.* arising from our own Passions, nay, *devilish*, being set on by the malicious Agency of infernal Spirits, *James* iii. 14, 15, 16, 17.

And thus it appears when really we are out of Charity with any Persons who have provoked us, and fall short of that Love of Enemies, which God's Law requires of us. For then we love them not as we ought, when we are any ways *unjust* to them, or apt upon every little Occasion to *strive* and *contend* with them, or deal *uncharitably* by them in any Conversation, particularly in *ma-*

* Πικρὸν ζῆλος.

licious Surmizes, and *Suſpicions*, and *uncandid Cenſures*, which are ſo general in *all*, but more abundant in *our* Times, when the *Nation* is divided into *Parties*, and Men ſeem to have forgot that there is *any Religion towards Enemies*, or any Love due to them, who have given them perſonal Provocations, or ſide with a Party oppoſite to that which they eſpouſe.

And if upon a Survey of our Carriage in theſe Particulars, we find this to be our Caſe, and that we are thus out of Charity, and have not forgiven any who have provoked us: It is very true, whilſt that laſts, we are *unfit for the Holy Sacrament*, ſince he who worthily joins in it, muſt come in *Love*, and have freely forgiven all the World. But then we are alſo equally unfit to *pray*, or to ask the *Forgiveneſs of our own Sins* at God's Hands; ſince, if we pray in *Wrath* and *Enmity*, he will not hear us. Nay, this *not Forgiving others*, turns all our own Prayers into a *Curſe*, and makes them a dreadful and downright *Imprecation* againſt ourſelves. For when we ſay this Prayer, *Forgive us our Treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us*, with *Malice* in our Hearts: The plain *Engliſh* of it is, that God would *revenge* our *Treſpaſſes* on *our* Heads, as we are ready to *revenge their Treſpaſſes* on *theirs*; which is ſo bold and foolhardy an Addreſs, as no Man, I preſume, will put up to God, who conſiders what he ſays.

When really we are out of Charity therefore, and have not forgiven others; we are not only unfit to Communicate, but to the full as unfit to make any Prayers, or place any Hope in Almighty God. And when once he is ſenſible that this is his State, there is no wiſe Man will continue in it, but will forthwith reſolve to lay aſide all his Reſentments, and get out of it.

This

This he may find *difficult*, indeed, when he sets about it; but it is *absolutely necessary* to be done, and unless he would incur the Wrath of God, and the eternal Pains of Hell, which are ten thousand Times *more* difficult, he must go through therewith. But if he considers how much he himself needs to be forgiven, and how he has infinitely more provoked God, than his Brother has provoked him; he will find it no very hard Matter to forgive him for *Christ*'s Sake, tho' it might be hard to do it for his *own*. And besides, if he will not dwell upon the Injuries or Unkindnesses which are so provoking, but *cast them out of his Mind* so soon as he perceives they are enter'd into it, it will yet be much easier to him. He cannot *quite forget* them, it may be, so as that he shall never more think of them: But when they happen to start up in his Thoughts, without his Leave, he can chuse whether he will *harbour* and give Way to them. And if he will be careful to do that, the great Difficulty of Forgiveness is removed. For it is our dwelling upon an Injury received, and harkening to ill Suggestions, which *aggravate* the Deed, and the *Malice* or *Unworthiness* of him who offered it, that heightens our Resentment thereof to that Degree, that we have much ado before we can bring ourselves to be reconciled. So that if we would not harbour and entertain the Thoughts of it, the Forgiveness of an Injury would be found much more easy. And this Remedy St. *Paul* prescribes, to prevent all *Wrath and revengeful Carriage*; *Let not the Sun go down upon your Wrath, neither give Place to the Devil*; or to a * Calumniator and Accuser, *i. e.* to exasperating Thoughts and Insinuations, whe-

* Τῷ Διαβόλῳ.

ther ſuggeſted to us by our own Minds, or by the Whiſperings of others, *Eph.* iv. 26, 27.

And thus having proved that we *are bound* to ſhew our *Enemies*, and thoſe who have *provoked* us, *all the Offices of general Charity*, or all that Love which is due to our *Neighbour at large*, even to *all other Perſons*; ſo that whilſt we allow ourſelves in the Breach of them, we are unfit for this Holy Feaſt, and muſt inſtantly amend, that we may be fitted for it. I proceed now,

2. To ſhew that we *are not bound to ſhew them all the Offices of ſpecial Eſteem, Truſt, and Confidence, which are not fit to be placed promiſcuouſly on all Men*, but *on ſuch only as are qualified for them:* So that when we fail only in theſe, we are in no Fault, nor have any Need to be troubled, or kept back thereby.

We are not bound to make an Enemy a *familiar Companion*, or a *particular Friend*, a *Partner* of our *Secrets*, a *Sharer* of our *Truſt*, or an *Officer* in our *Buſineſs*; but may be more afraid of him, and keep more at a Diſtance from him, and uſe more Caution and Reſerve in converſing with him, than with other Men. As for all the Inſtances of *general* Charity, indeed, they are due upon a Reaſon which is *common* to our Enemies with others, *i. e.* their being *Men* and *Chriſtians:* So that they ought to ſhare in them, and we fail of our Duty towards them, when at any Time we with-hold *them* from them. But as for theſe Marks of ſpecial Eſteem and Confidence, they are founded on *particular* Reaſons and Fitneſs of Perſons, as *Likeneſs of Humour, Fidelity of Affection, Aptneſs for our Affairs*, or the like: So that in them we are not bound to our *Enemies*, who are plainly unfit, thro' their *profeſs'd Enmity*, or *treacherous Falſeneſs*; nay, nor to any *one* among *others*;

others; but are left at Liberty to make such Choice as shall seem best to our own *Prudence*. This Liberty must in all *Equity* and *Reason* be allowed us, because upon a right Choice of those Persons, the *Innocence*, *Ease*, and *Safety* of our Lives most nearly depends; and without being left to Discretion therein, we must unavoidably throw ourselves into inextricable Snares, and numberless Calamities. And that it is allowed, our Saviour clearly intimates, when he recommends to us the *Wisdom of Serpents*, bidding us shew all the Prudence we can devise, so long as no Unrighteousness mixes therewith, but it is wholly guided by the *Dove's Innocence*, Mat. x. 16. And in this he has gone before us in his own Practice. For tho' he loved those *who believed on him*, John ii. with all that Love which his Law requires, *i. e.* with a *general Affection:* Yet, as the *Evangelist* tells us, *he did not* trust, or *commit himself to them, because he knew all Men*, v. 23, 24.

So long then as we *requite no Injuries* upon our Enemies, or others that have offended us, nor are wanting to them in any Point of *Justice*, *Charity*, or *Peace*, which is due to all Persons; we are not uncharitable towards them, in *thinking the worse* of their Persons, or *carrying* ourselves at a *greater Distance* towards them, or *forbearing* to use them in the Quality of *particular Friends* and *Confidents*, as we did formerly, or *withdrawing* some other *special Favours*, which their Fault has justly forfeited, and they have no more Claim to.

Indeed, if afterwards they *repent* of their Offence, which makes the Breach between us, and amend that Fault which unfits them for our *Business* or *Converse*; when only *we ourselves* are *concerned* in their Re-admission, and the Things we

have to intruſt with them are not of that Weight as that we may juſtly be *jealous* over them, and we have no other Cauſe but that Offence to exclude them from the ſame, it is a Chriſtian Part, not only to retain them in a general Charity in common with all other Perſons, but alſo to re-admit them to the *ſame* State, which formerly they held with us.

When the Concern is not purely *our own*, but we are ſet to ſecure *higher* and more *publick Ends*; there, it is true, we are not bound preſently to re-admit them to the ſame State upon their Repentance. And thus it is in the Point of *Diſcipline*, wherein the Sin is not preſently pardoned, ſo ſoon as the Criminal has repented of it: But the Puniſhment is oft-times continued (as it was in the *laſting Excommunications* of the *primitive Chriſtians)* that the Durableneſs of the Smart may both *terrify others* from offending in like Manner, and *amend themſelves*, by begettting a more laſting Memory and Abhorrence of their Offences. And thus it is too in Point of *publick Truſt*, when we act not for ourſelves, but purſuant to our Care of others: For there we may lay aſide *Penitents*, becauſe they have once ſinned, thinking there is more Safety in thoſe who have ſtill ſtood firm, and kept always innocent. And thus St. *Paul* did with *Mark*, who had once declined the Toil and Peril of *converting the Gentile World*, Acts xiii. 13. For, after he had freely forgiven that Tergiverſation, yet, ſays St. *Luke*, in the Diſpute betwixt *Barnabas* and *him*, *he thought not good to take him* for a Companion, becauſe he had once deſerted them, and *went not with them to the Work*; but preferred *Silas* before him, who had never flinched from it, *Acts* xv. 37, 38, 40.

But

But when only we *ourſelves* are concerned in their Re-admiſſion; and when the Things which we have to intruſt with them are not of that Weight as we may well be *jealous* over them, (in which Caſe, indeed, a great Caution is requiſite) and when we have *no other Cauſe* but *that Offence* to exclude them from our Kindneſs or Confidence (for if upon other Accounts the Choice at firſt was ill made, and either already *is*, or *may* be alter'd to our Benefit, ſince the fixing on any Man for a Friend or Dependant, is not a neceſſary Duty, but a diſcretionary free Thing, we are not blameworthy in correcting it:) When the Caſe, I ſay, thus ſtands, as to all thoſe Particulars, it is a *Chriſtian* Act to admit returning *Penitents* to the ſame State which they held before they offended us. For when once they have repented of a Fault, they are as fit for our *Affairs* or *Friendſhip*, as they were before they committed it. So that if any Marks of our Diſpleaſure remain upon them ſtill after that, which in the preſent State of Things might conveniently enough be alter'd, it is not *their Unfitneſs*, but *our Reſentment*, which is the Cauſe thereof. And when we go ſo to *eaſe* our offended Minds by their *Loſs*, this looks not like *forgiving a Treſpaſs*, but *revenging* it. And this Re-admiſſion to their former State, is according to St. *Paul*'s Direction, *Col.* iii. 13. *to forgive others, even as Chriſt forgives us*; for he admits Penitents to the State of innocent Perſons, pardoning without upbraiding, and quite *forgetting*, as if the Sin had never been done, *Heb.* viii. 12. and according to what he preſcribes, 1 *Cor.* xiv. 20. when he bids us in *Malice to be Children*; for after once they are made Friends, they forget all, and return to the ſame Degree of Love and Confidence again. The *wiſe Son* of *Sirach* ſays, in-

deed, that for *four Things*, viz. *Upbraiding, and Pride, and diſcloſing of Secrets, and a treacherous Wound, every Friend will depart*, and never more be reconciled, *Ecclus.* xxii. 22. But he ſpeaks only of what *ordinarily is done*, or of what *might have been done among the* Jews; not of what *may now be done* among us, of whom God expects an higher Forgiveneſs, after the Manner of *Children*, and the Example of *Chriſt Jeſus*. So that when once they have ſufficiently repented of their Sins againſt us, it is fit that we forgive them to as full Purpoſe, as if they had never ſinned at all.

And in judging of this Repentance, we ought not to be *ſtrict* and *rigid* in ſtanding upon exact Proofs; but to be *candid*, and apt to interpret all Signs of it to the beſt Senſe, leaning to the Side of Love and eaſy Admittance. If they take Shame to themſelves, and are ſo far humbled as *penitentially to confeſs their Sin:* It is a great Argument of their being ſet againſt it, and, in the caſe of the *firſt* Offence eſpecially, a ſtrong Preſumption that they will no more commit the ſame. Altho' when once theſe Confeſſions become *cuſtomary*, and are ſtill made and broke anew upon every freſh Occaſion; it is a Sign only that they mean well, and would amend if they could; but no Preſumption that they will do ſo, ſince their penitent Reſolution plainly is too weak, and their Luſts, upon the Trial, prove ſtill too ſtrong for it. And ſince theſe Confeſſions are manifeſtly an incompetent Proof of their having thoroughly repented; we cannot be bound to believe them, or obliged thereupon to a Return of Friendſhip.

Our Saviour, indeed, tells us, that *If our Brother treſpaſs againſt us ſeven Times in a Day, and ſeven Times in a Day turn again, ſaying, I repent; we muſt forgive him*, Luke xvii. 4. And here, if by

by *forgiving*, were meant *reſtoring to the ſame State of Favour* and *Affection*; this would infer his Profeſſion of Repentance, tho' never ſo often broke, to be a ſufficient Demonſtration of the ſame, and a juſt Ground of our Return to Friendſhip with him. But this, I ſuppoſe, ſpeaks only of ſuch Forgiveneſs, as admits him, not to the *ſame* State which he held with us before, but only to the State of a *Neighbour at large*, or of other Perſons. And albeit this is due to him, whether he ſay, *I repent*, or no; yet doth our Saviour here injoin it upon his Repentance, not becauſe the *Thing* required it, but that he might more directly oppoſe the *Jewiſh* Doctrine in this Point, which was too ſcanty in forgiving even a *returning Penitent*. For this they limited to a ſmall Number of Times, it being a received Rule among the *Rabbins*, that *after one has forgiven any Perſon thrice, he has gone as far as he needs, and that no Man is bound to forgive the fourth Offence* *.

To forgive an Injury then ſo far as not to return it, nor to be wanting in any neighbourly Office toward him that offer'd it, is plain a Duty, upon his ſaying he repents of it: Yea, as hath been ſhewn, whether he repents or no. But to the evidencing of ſuch a Repentance, as would oblige us to confide in him again, and as leaves *no Imputation of Unfitneſs in him*, but only of our *Reſentment* for a Reaſon of our Diſtance from him, we may require more than his ſaying *He repents*, and giving us his bare Word and Promiſe, after they have ſeveral Times deceived us. For no *wiſe* Man would truſt to that, which is oftner wrong than right, as every Perſon's Word is, who hitherto has always failed to keep his Word: And

* Dr. *Lightf.* Hor. Heb. *in* loc. e Jom.

Chri-

Christianity in no Case forbids us to be *wise* in our own Concerns, but directs us to *be as subtle as Serpents*, so long as we are careful withal to keep as *innocent as Doves*, Mat. x. 16. It commends us for being *prudent* in Business, and seeing beforehand to prevent *other Mens Sins*, by cutting off from them all Opportunities; and it may be *our own* too, by putting by those Temptations which would *always* trouble and molest our *Peace*, and *often-times* indanger our *Innocence*. So that altho' we are to be very *favourable* in construing the Sufficiency of our Enemies Repentance; yet may we be *discreet* withal, and are not to be *foolishly blind*, and unreasonably easy in approving it. We must only lean to the Side of Favour, when there are such Signs as to a wise Man look towards it; but not rashly conclude he has sufficiently repented, when there are no likely Signs thereof at all. But the Fault of Men seldom lies on this Side, of being *over easy to be fully reconciled*; so that the other, of being *over rigid*, is that which the Generality of Men ought to guard themselves against. And therefore in judging of the Sufficiency of their Repentance, this is the great Rule which we are to take along with us, *viz.* That *as* it is *one* Part of Charity *fully to forgive our offending Brother*, and re-admit him to our *former* Favour, on his *Repentance*; so it is *another* to be *favourable* in judging whether he has *sufficiently repented*, and given such Proofs thereof as ought to be believed, or no.

As for these farther Effects of Love towards Enemies, and those who have provoked us then, *viz. our not barely retaining them in a general Charity and Affection*, as we do *all other Men*, but *re-admitting them to special Trust*, *Familiarity*, and *Friendship*, which they had in their *former Station*; they

they are not always *due* to them, nor are at all *proper* to be placed on them, but only when they *repent* and *amend* those Faults and Unfitnesses which made them *unqualified* for the same. So that whilst their *Impenitence* lasts, or that Change doth not *sufficiently appear* to us, we are not obliged to express our Love in these at all.

And since we are not bound to them, nor are guilty of any Sin in omitting them; that Omission can never unfit us for the *Holy Communion.* So that whilst we shew them all the Offices of *general Kindness*, and are wanting in nothing but *special Favours*, which belong not to them in their present Circumstances; we have all the Charity for them which our Lord requires, and therefore, if we have nothing else to hinder us, may readily join in this Feast of Love when God invites us to it.

And this might serve for a sufficient Answer, to those *supposed* Instances of *Uncharitableness* mentioned above, which hinder several *fit* and *worthy* Persons from partaking in this Holy Ordinance. But for their *fuller* Satisfaction in these Points, I will add something concerning each of the *Particulars.*

1. They fear they have not that Charity for *Enemies* and *offensive Persons*, which God's Law requires of them, because *they cannot forget as well as forgive*, but still *remember their Injuries or Unkindnesses.*

But did not our *Saviour* himself, that perfect Pattern of Forgiveness, remember *Peter's Denial* of him after he had *bitterly repented* of it? *John* xxi. 15, 16, 17. Did he not sufficiently hint it to him, by questioning him *three Times* about his *Love of him*, answerable to his having *three Times denied him*; that by calling it over upon his Remembrance, he might encrease his Care and Watch-

Watchfulneſs againſt it afterwards? So that it is not the *bare* Remembrance, but remembring them to *evil Purpoſes*, which is to be blamed in us. When they bear in Mind the Evils which they have received then, let them conſider whether they do it to any ill Effect. Do they think of them *to upbraid their Enemies therewith*, or to *do* them a *Shame for the ſame*, and ſit as *Spies* upon their Actions, only that they may *find Fault*, and *aggravate Miſcarriages*, or to return the Ill to them again in tranſgreſſing any of thoſe Inſtances of *common Juſtice* or *Charity* above recited? If their Remembrance thereof doth not provoke them into any of theſe ſinful Expreſſions of *Hatred*, and *Ill-will* againſt them, they need not be troubled at it, for there is no Hurt done thereby. It is not in *their Power*, it may be, to forget the Wrongs they have received; for when the Knowledge of Things is once fix'd in our Minds, though we can forbear to *reflect* and *inſiſt* on them, wherein the great Danger lies, yet can we not loſe that Knowledge when we pleaſe. So that after we have received an Injury, we are not to be blamed barely for remembring it; ſince we are no more *able* always wholly to *forget* what has *paſt*, than we were at *firſt* to be wholly *ignorant* and *inſenſible* of it whilſt it was preſent. Nay, in many Caſes, if we *could*, it is not *adviſeable* that we *ſhould* forget it. For whilſt the injurious Perſon is *impenitent*, and ready to repeat the ſame again, the Remembrance of the Harm he has done us will do us good, in *quickning our Care*, and making us more *wary* and *watchful* to prevent his doing us any more. But if once he has repented of what he did, ſo as that he ought to be admitted to his *fomer State*; then, indeed, it may ſeem very deſirable, that as much as in us lies, we ſhould *forget* it, by giving no Entertainment

tainment or Incouragement to the Thoughts thereof. For the Remembrance then can ſerve no good Ends, but may prove a very great Snare to us, in making us *backward in Kindneſs*, or *fit to catch fire on ſmall Provocations*, or *uncandid* in *interpreting* his *Words*, or *Actions* afterwards. It will not be our *Sin*, till theſe, or ſome other ill Effects are wrought thereby. But it will be our *Temptation*, whereby, it is very like, we ſhall ſometimes be much indangered. So that then it may be very fit to lay it aſide, for fear of receiving Hurt by it.

2. They fear that, after an *Unkindneſs* or *Injury* received, they are not ſo *charitable* as they ought, becauſe *they think the worſe of him who offered it.*

Now if they are *uncandid* in *judging the injurious Action*, *i. e.* if they impute it to the worſt Cauſe, and make not thoſe Allowances of *Forgetfulneſs*, *Over-ſight*, and the like, which it would well admit of, and which Love would fix upon it, were it to make the Conſtruction; it is true they are ſo far wanting in their Duty of *Love to their Enemy*. This, indeed, is hard for us always to avoid, and therefore we muſt be ſure to take the more Care, and keep the ſtricter Watch againſt it. And if after all, through *Unwarineſs*, through *an Accuſer's laying out only the Interpretations of the ill Side*, or *our own ſuſpicious Temper inſenſibly leaning towards it*, we are ingaged in an uncandid Conſtruction ere we can diſcover the ſame: There our *Inconſideration* and *Unadviſedneſs* will be our Excuſe for it. But ſo ſoon as ever we can *obſerve* it, or are ſhewn how the Action is equally capable of a *favourable Senſe*, we muſt ſtrike in with *it*, and correct our former *haſty* Judgment. So that if by *thinking worſe*, they mean that they think worſe than needs of the *Action*, and incur an *uncandid Interpretation*; this is the Sentence which they are

to

to pass upon it. Either it was an *innocently inconsiderate Escape*, and then their *Haste* and *Unadvisedness* will *excuse* it: Or it was a *known Sin*, *i. e.* it either was, or, had they not been grosly partial, and evidently bent to think ill, would have been committed with Observation; and then their *Repentance* and Amendment must *atone* for it.

But if by *thinking* worse, they mean, that when the Fact is evidently ill, they have a *worse Opinion of the Person*; there is no want of Charity in that, because their ill Opinion is upon just Cause, and they cannot in reason think better of him. They judge only according to the plain *Truth* of Things, and that the best Souls may safely do, and it is no uncharitable Part in any of them, For thus our *Lord* thought of *Judas*, when he most affectingly suggested to him the Baseness of *his Betraying*, and that too *with a Kiss*, Luke xxii.48. the Sign of Friendship and Affection. And thus the *Apostles* thought of the *Jews*, whom they looked upon as *wicked Murderers*, Acts ii. 13. and vii. 52. for our Saviour's Crucifixion. And thus St. *Paul* thought of *Peter*, when he blamed him for his *sinful Compliance* and Dissimulation, Gal. ii. 11, 12, 13, 14. And thus *God* himself thinks of *us* upon our Miscarriages, for he sees them, and dislikes us for them, and thereby magnifies the Honour of his *Patience* and *loving Kindness*, in that he is *good*, even to *the Unthankful and the Evil*, Luke vi. 35. and shews us Favour notwithstanding them. And thus also may we very *innocently*, and *charitably* too think ill of any others, when they have evidently deserved it, and given us just Occasion for it. For the Work of *Charity*, or Love to others, is not to make us blind in a plain Case, and see no Faults in them when they are clear before us.

For this is *Love without Eyes*, which is by no means the *Love of wise Men*, or the *Charity of Christians*. It is not always *possible in Nature*, nor could be shewn if we should attempt it. For, when other Mens Faults are evident, there is no way of being dark against the Sun, or shutting out the Light whilst our Eyes are open. But if it always could be done, yet is it not in any wise proper to be *advised*. For if we must see no Hurt in any Persons, it unavoidably destroys all wise *Choice* of *Friends* and *Companions*, *Relations* and *Dependants*; all seasonable *Counsel* and *Instruction*, *Reproof* and *Admonition*; and so produces most sad Effects, both in *Conversation* and *Religion*. The Work of Charity to others then, is not to wink against a Fault when it is *apparent*, but not to be *quick in discerning*, and *forward in presuming* it, when there is *no just Cause* to impute any Fault to them. So that if we would be charitable to our Enemies, we must not believe ill of them, till it sufficiently is made out to us; nor conclude them faulty in a doubtful Case, when there are Reasons on both Sides, and they are as likely to be otherwise; nor presume they had an ill Design in that, which lies as open to a good, and might have no Hurt at all in it. In these Cases, where their Offence is not clearly proved, it is Uncharitableness in us to be hasty in believing them to be guilty thereof. But when their *Enmity* is *profest*, and their *Unkindness*, or *injurious Dealing*, *is evident*; it is no Duty in any Man to shut his Eyes against the Light, nor any Uncharitableness at all to esteem them the less for it, We may think him a *dishonest Man*, who has wilfully *injured* us; and him a *false Friend* who has *betray'd our Secrets* to our Prejudice, as our Saviour *Christ* did *Judas*; and that he is not so kind

to

to us as he *profeſſes*, who refuſes to *do good* to us when he might do it. When we judge of Perſons not from *raſh Surmiſes*, but from clear *Evidence* and *Experience*, we may judge as we find Cauſe; and if we judge ill of them, it is not becauſe we are inclined to think hardly of them, but becauſe they have deſerved to be hardly thought of; ſo that our ill Opinion is owing purely to their Faults, and not to any want of Charity in ourſelves.

3. Some Perſons of *paſſionate Natures* fear they have not that Charity for Enemies which is requir'd of all good Men, becauſe, when ſome have been moſt miſchievous to them, *their Hearts are troubled*, and *they are inwardly moved as often as they ſee them*; not with any *angry* or *revengeful Paſſion*, which would do Hurt to their Enemies, but only with a *ſad Remembrance of their own Loſſes*, which they have ſuſtained by them.

Now where this is really the Caſe, (and they who are concerned muſt be faithful to their own Souls in judging whether it be or no) if there be any Fault for them to anſwer for, it is not *want of Charity towards their Enemies*, but *want of Patience towards God*, and *of Contentment in their own Condition*. They ſhew no Uncharitableneſs towards their Enemies thereby, ſince they have no wrathful Intent to ſeek their Hurt, nor have the leaſt Deſire to return the Injuries which they have ſuffer'd from their Hands. They are troubled at the *Sight of them*, indeed; but that is only as they put them in mind of their own Miſeries, which they have occaſioned. They are grieved to ſee *them*, as they would be to ſee the *Picture of a departed Friend*, whoſe Death went very near to them, *i. e.* only as it calls into their Thoughts that Loſs, which is very afflicting. And this *Grief*, whatever it may be with *Impatience*, is not charge-

able with any *Uncharitableneſs* towards our Enemies. For it is no Part of the Charity which we owe them, to be inſenſible of what befals ourſelves, ſo that they cannot complain of us for lamenting our own Miſeries. Nor can they complain of us for doing it at their Preſence, becauſe they being the Cauſe of all, the Sight of them may well bring it to our Remembrance; And if we may be ſorry at all for our own Unhappineſs, we may be allowed to grieve then, eſpecially, when we have thoſe Things before us, which are moſt apt to repreſent and ſuggeſt it to us.

So long then as they are careful ſo to *moderate* their Grief for what is loſt, (and they muſt be watchful in this Point) as that it doth not make them *diſtruſt God*, nor *repine* at what he has order'd, nor ſettle into an *habitual Diſcontent*, nor is otherwiſe *ſinful or intemperate*; it need be no Scruple to their Minds, nor hinder them from the Holy Sacrament. They may endeavour to prevent it, both for their own *Eaſe* and *Safety*, that they may neither be *pain'd* nor *tempted* therewith: And to this End it may be very adviſeable ſo far as they well may, to avoid the *Preſence of the injurious Perſon*, till they have ſo well digeſted their Loſs, as that they can look on him without Trouble. But if at any Time they meet, and their Hearts are ſorrowful at the Sight; ſo long as this Grief is not in itſelf ſinful or intemperate, nor has any angry Motions and Expreſſions of Revenge accompanying it, they need not be put into Doubts and Scruples with it, ſince their State is not diſturb'd, nor their Souls at all endanger'd thereby.

4. They are afraid they have not ſuch Charity for their Enemies as they ought, becauſe *they are not ſo free with them*, nor *repoſe the ſame Truſt in*

them as they formerly did, but carry themſelves with more *Reſerve*, and at a *greater Diſtance* from them, than they uſed to do before the Breach was made betwixt them.

But ſo long as their Enemies are *impenitent*, all this has no Hurt in it: So that they ought not to be hindered from the Holy Sacrament, or affrighted by it. For this Wariness in converſing with our Enemies, is no more than *Chriſt* himſelf ſhew'd in converſing with the *Jews*; who *would not walk openly among them, becauſe they ſought to kill him*, John vii. 1. and *chap.* xi. 53, 54. It is no more than he taught his *Diſciples* to uſe, when he *ſent them forth as Sheep in the midſt of Wolves*; for then he bid them take to themſelves all the *wary Wiſdom* and prudent Care of *Serpents*, Mat. x. 16. Indeed, if any one who injures or offends us, expreſſes himſelf ſorry for what he has done, and *ſufficiently repents* thereof; we ought, as I have ſhewn, to admit him to his former State, and to treat him, now he is a *Penitent*, as *God* doth *us*, or as *Children* do their *Play-fellows*, i. e. as if he had never ſinn'd, but had kept always innocent. But ſtill we ſee, that we may very *lawfully*, and very *wiſely* too, withdraw from him our *particular Familiarity*, *Truſt*, or *Friendſhip*. If we find a Perſon *diſhoneſt once*, till we ſee him a new Man, we are not bound to truſt him a *ſecond* Time; for that were to give him an Opportunity of *committing*, and put us into the Danger of *ſuffering* the *ſame* again from him. If it is his Temper to *fall foul* upon us in *Diſcourſe*, or to be *paſſionate*, or *reproachful* upon light Occaſions; till it appears that he has learned to act otherwiſe, we are not bound to uſe his Company and Acquaintance; for that were not only to throw away our own *Eaſe*, but to endanger our own *Meekneſs*, *Peace*,

and *other* Virtues, by *casting ourselves upon Temptations*; when as we ought to be so far from seeking them ourselves, that we are taught to *pray daily* against those, which *God's Providence* might allot for us, *Mat.* vi. 13. If he lays wait to *over-reach*, or is industrious to *vex*, or is any ways *uneasy* or *prejudicial* to us in his Conversation, we may lawfully carry ourselves at a Distance from him, till he has reformed those *Vices*, or corrected those *ill Tempers* which harm or annoy us, and shew'd us that now we may come nearer to him with Safety to ourselves. This Distance we may use towards any Persons who offend against us, out of a *natural Love* and *Care* for our *ownselves*; but if they are our *Children* or *Servants*, or any ways *subject* to us, and *dependant* on us, there is still a more obliging Reason for the same, and that is *their Amendment* and *Reformation* likewise. For when the Fault is great enough to bear it, these Marks of our Displeasure are a necessary Part of *Discipline*, and altogether fit to be used, to make them duly sensible of their Offence, and afraid ever after to repeat it. Which is so far from being an *unkind* Part towards them, that in reality it is the *truest* Way of *shewing Kindness*, being the most proper Course to amend them, and to bring them back at once to *their former State of Innocence*, and to all Expressions of *our Favour* too.

And thus it appears, that so long as we are careful to shew our Enemies all that *Justice*, *Charity and Peace*, which is due to our *Neighbour at large*, and to all other Persons; we have as much Love for them as God requires, though we *still remember their Injuries*, and *Unkindnesses*, or *think the worse of their Persons* as we have just Cause, or *use more Reserve*, and *keep a greater Distance* in our Carriage *towards them*, and the like, than we did

before they had provoked us. We ſhew all the Love which is expected, when we are not wanting to them in any Offices of *common Charity and Neighbourhood*. This makes us accepted with Almighty God, and ſo fits us for the *Holy Sacrament*: So that although we do not admit them to our *particular Eſteem* and *Friendſhip* whilſt they have not ſufficiently evidenc'd that *Repentance*, which ſhould qualify them for the ſame, that ought not to put us back, and hinder us from partaking thereof.

As for *theſe* Hindrances then, which detain ſome good People from this *Feaſt*, viz. their *remembring Injuries*, or *thinking the worſe of their Enemies*, or *carrying themſelves at a Diſtance towards them*, or excluding them from all *particular Truſt* and *Confidence*, and the like; ſo long as they ſhew them all that Love, which is due to all Men out of *common Charity* and *Neighbourhood*, and are ready to ſhew them *more* when their *Repentance* has made them fit to receive it; they ought not in any wiſe to put them by it. They are no Breach of that Charity which God has required, and therefore do not unfit them for the Holy Sacrament; ſo that when they are all their Hindrance, they need not ſtay away, but may chearfully approach thereto.

CHAP. IV.

Of LAW-SUITS.

The CONTENTS.

They are an Hindrance from the Communion, when there is Sin in them. They are not ſinful in themſelves,

ſelves, which is ſhewn, 1. *From the Neceſſity of them.* 2. *From the Magiſtrates Office being appointed for them.* 3. *From God's taking legal Determinations upon himſelf, as if he were the Author thereof.* 4. *From Courts erected by Conſent in the Apoſtles Days, which miniſtered to them. Theſe St.* Paul *preſcribed to the* Corinthians, 1 *Cor.* vi. *They are the Aſſemblies mentioned,* James ii. 2, 5. *From our Saviour's, and St.* Paul's *Practice, who, in claiming the Benefit of judicial Proceſs, warranted and authorized it. An Objection from* Mat. v. 38, 39, 40. *conſidered: which is ſhewn, not to condemn defending ourſelves in any Caſe, when others implead us; nor moving Suits in all Caſes, but only in caſe of lighter Loſſes and Indignities, ſuch as our Saviour there mentions, or making them miniſter to Revenge in any others, which are of more Importance. And* 1 Cor. vi. 7. *anſwered, and ſhewn to ſpeak only of the ſame. But they are ſinful,* 1. *When they are begun upon an unjuſtifiable Ground. Such they always are,* 1. *When they are vindictive, not reparative; as when we ſue inſolvent Perſons; or others upon ſuch Words or Actions, for which, beſides Coſts, no Damages that are valuable are like to be allotted us.* 2. *When they are for Reparation of ſmall Things, which do not countervail the Evils and Hazards of a Suit, but ought to be a Matter of Patience and Forgiveneſs, and ſo ſhould be put up without Recourſe to Judicatures. In judging of this Smallneſs, we muſt not eſtimate by our own Pride and Paſſions; but by the Reality of Things, and the Judgment of indifferent, humble, and diſpaſſionate Perſons. This is true, not only in caſe of Injuries to our ownſelves, but alſo in caſe of Truſt, when we have the Charge of others.* 2. *Suits are ſinful, when they are carried on by a ſinful Management:*

As they are, when they make us transgress any of those Duties towards our Adversaries, which oblige us towards all Persons. To avoid all these in suing, is an hard Point: So we must be slow in commencing an Action, and very circumspect when we are forced upon it. The Answer to this Hindrance summ'd up.

BESIDES those Particulars, which I have consider'd in the *last Chapter*, there is another *Want of Charity*, which may seem of greater Weight, and which is most commonly pleaded in Excuse of Mens abstaining from the Holy Sacrament; and that is, the Point of *Law-Suits*. For this is very frequently given as a Reason why Men dare not receive the Communion, because they have a *legal Controversy with their Neighbours, and a Suit depending.*

Now as to *Law-Suits*, when they have *no Sin* in them, they are like all other *indifferent* Things, and *need not hinder* Men: But when they are *sinful*, they are *like all other Sins*, i. e. they unfit us till we shew *Repentance*, and ought to hinder us so long as we continue in them. But as then they are an Hindrance to a *worthy Receiving*; so are they equally to a *worthy Prayer*, and to all *just Hopes of Heaven.* Whilst we go on with them, we cannot pray to God, or think to have our Sins pardon'd, or, should we be snatched away to Judgment in this State, expect to be happy in another World. And this is a State, wherein no considerate Man will persist for one Moment. But when he sees his Suit is so offensive unto God, and brings his eternal Welfare into so great Hazard, he will either learn to manage it more innocently, so as that he may no longer offend thereby; or break it off without Delay, and instantly

ſtantly put an End to it. And when once he has done this, or is fully purpoſed in his own Mind ſo to do; he is again a Friend of God, and fit to join in the Holy Sacrament, as well as in Prayers, or in any other Part of Worſhip.

Thus doth the *Weight of this Hindrance* from the Holy Communion, lie in the *Innocence*, or *Unlawfulneſs of the Suit* which is depending. And therefore that Perſons *at Law* may know, when they are unfit to communicate till they have put a Stop to their Guilt, and when they are fit for the ſame, during their *Proſecution of it:* I ſhall here ſtate the Caſe of *Law-Suits*, and ſhew when a *Trial* is our *Fault*, and when it is *faultleſs*, that ſo we may know both when we *need not* be hindered from the Holy Table, and alſo when we *ought to be hindered* thereby.

In purſuit of this, I ſhall endeavour to clear up theſe *two* Particulars.

1. *A Suit* at Law *is not a Thing unlawful in itſelf, but may be innocent, if nothing elſe comes in to make a Sin thereof.* But then,

2. *It is our Sin, and a Matter of our Account, when it is either upon an unjuſtifiable Ground, or carried on by a ſinful Management.*

1. I ſay, *a Suit* at Law *is not a Thing unlawful in itſelf, but may be innocent, if nothing elſe comes in to make a Sin thereof.*

It is no unlawful Thing barely to diſpute a Title, or to bring an Action; it is in ſome Caſes allowed, as well as in others it is prohibited: So that a Man may be faultleſs who has a Suit, unleſs ſomething more comes in to make him a Tranſgreſſor. The Offence lies not in the *Nature* of it, ſo as to be inſeparable from the *Thing*; but only in the *Cauſe*, or in the *Manner of ſuing*. For as St. *Paul* ſaid of the *Law of God* among the

Jews, ſo may we of the *Laws* of our *ſeveral Countries*, *the Law is* a *good* Thing, *if a Man uſe it lawfully*, 1 Tim. i. 8. it is no Sin to uſe it, or take the Benefit of it; but only to tranſgreſs ſome other Precept, or join ſome other Sin therewith, when we do make uſe thereof.

Now this may appear,

1. From *the Neceſſity of Law-Suits.*

2. From *the Magiſtrates Office being appointed for them.*

3. From *God's taking a legal Determination upon himſelf, as if he were the Author thereof.*

4. From *Courts being erected by Conſent in the Apoſtles Days, to miniſter thereto.*

5. From *the Practice of our Bleſſed Saviour, and St.* Paul, *who claimed the Benefit of Judicial Proceſs*, and thereby *plainly warranted and authorized it.*

1. It appears, I ſay, from *the Neceſſity of Law-ſuits.* A Trial *at Law* muſt needs be innocent in itſelf when nothing elſe corrupts it, becauſe it is a Thing which we cannot want, and there is no living in this World without it. For take away *Law*, which would ſecure *innocent Mens Properties*, and bridle all *envious*, *angry*, *ſpiteful*, *covetous*, *inſolent*, and *ambitious* Mens *rapacious*, and *enchroaching Humours:* And, ſince all Places are fully ſtored with theſe injurious Tempers (the Wicked being by far the greateſt Numbers) the *Quiet* and *Conſcientious* muſt flee into *Woods* and *Deſerts*; or, if they ſtay to aſſociate with others, they will every where become a *Prey*, to their *greedy*, and *uſurping Neighbours.* If there were no Laws to protect them, there were no living in this World for good Men; and in effect there would be no Laws, if it were a Sin in them to try a Title, or right themſelves by them. For no

Man, who had a Mind to do wrong, would be aw'd from doing it, by a Law that is always to be a Sword in a Scabbard, and muſt never be pleaded againſt him, or executed upon him, when he tranſgreſſes it. The Uſe of Law then in this World, is abſolutely neceſſary to *all Society*, to *keep Peace* and *Juſtice* in all Converſe, and to *protect* and *encourage* all ſuch as deſire to *ſerve God*, and to be *conſcientious*. And ſince there is that Neceſſity of it for God's Service, and all virtuous Ends; it cannot in its own Nature be a Thing offenſive, and unlawful to us. It cannot be itſelf a Sin, which God has made ſo abſolutely neceſſary to keep all others out: It muſt needs be allowed by him, ſince without it, his own Ends of Peace and Juſtice cannot be attain'd. It is at leaſt ſure an *innocent*, if not a *good* Thing, which gives the only Protection to all Goodneſs, and without which there is no living for good Men in Societies, where they may do God publick Service, and draw in others, nor indeed any ſafe Abode for them upon the Earth at all.

2. That a Suit *at Law* is not *ſinful in itſelf*, but may ſometimes be *innocent*, appears from *the Magiſtrates Office being appointed for it.*

One Part of the Magiſtrates Office lies, indeed, in *protecting* his Subjects againſt all *foreign Force* and *Invaſions*. But his moſt *ordinary* and *conſtant* Work, is to *adminiſter Juſtice*, and *maintain Peace* among *themſelves*, which is done by *hearing Cauſes*, and *judging in all Controverſies and Arraignments*, giving Sentence on the Side which the Law favours, and where the Right lies. Thus is it the Magiſtrates Office, to *hear* Cauſes or Suits *at Law*, and to *decide* them. And this Work he doth not aſſume to himſelf, either *without*, or *againſt* God's Liking; but *according* to *his Appointment*, and altogether

together *with his Approbation.* For *by me*, says *Wisdom*, *Kings reign, and Princes decree Justice*, Prov. viii. 15. And *the Powers that be*, says St. *Paul*, *are appointed of God, they are God's Ordinance*, Rom. xiii. 1, 2. And since God himself appoints them to hear our Causes; we may well presume that he will not look upon it as our Sin to bring them to their Hearing. For God would never appoint an Ordinance to minister only to Mens Sins, and to put them in a Way of multiplying Offences; so that since he has appointed Officers to hear it, a Suit *at Law* in itself must needs be innocent, and capable to be carried on without any Sin at all.

Nay, God has not only appointed the Magistrates Office for it: But moreover,

3. When *a legal Determination is given, he takes it upon himself, as if he were the Author thereof*; which is still a farther Evidence, that we do not sin, barely in seeking such a Determination of our Case.

He takes a legal Determination, I say, *upon himself, as if he were the Author thereof.* In the *Jewish State*, *God* was their *political Prince* and *Sovereign*, and the *Judges* among them were as much *his Deputies*, and did *represent his Person*, as now the *Judges* do the *Persons of their several Princes* in all other *Nations.* And therefore *Moses* told them when he appointed *them*, that the *Judgment was God's*, and that they gave Sentence only as his Deputies, and judg'd not for *themselves*, but for the *Lord*, Deut. i. 17.

Now, though *other* Nations cannot look upon God as their *secular King*, and *State-Head* in *all* those Points which the *Jews* could, for he gave them *Laws in Civil Affairs*, and issued out *Directions in State Exigences*, and the like: Yet as to *this*

this they can, that *all their Governors* are but *Substitutes under him*, and that he owns what is legally, and justly determined by them. For, the *Magistrate* he looks upon, as his *Minister* and *Vicegerent*, who doth all Things in his Name and Stead; *the Power*, says St. *Paul*, *is the Minister of God*, Rom. xiii. 4. And since he acts as *his Servant*, he takes his judicial Determination upon himself, as if it were his own, and he were the Author of it. For this he doth plainly in *criminal* Causes, and the Case is the same in other *judicial Causes* which are not *criminal*. When any Man is wrong'd, saith he, let him not *avenge himself*, *for Vengeance is mine*, *I will repay it*, i. e. by the Magistrate, who is my *Avenger to execute Wrath*, so that when he punishes, you may look upon it as if I had done it, *Rom.* xii. 19. and xiii. 4.

And since a legal Determination is owned by God himself, as if he were the Author thereof, we may be sure whilst all Things else are right, that there is no Hurt barely in our seeking to have our Cause so determined. It can be no Sin to ask what God grants, for *he hears not Sinners* in their Sins, *John* ix. 31. nor can it give any Offence in a controverted Case, to appeal to his own Sentence. So that since in all legal Determinations it is God himself, who by his Ministers passes Judgment; we may be assured that we do not displease him in applying ourselves thereto, when there is just Cause for us to do so.

4. That a *Suit at Law*, and all *judicial Process*, is not in itself a *Sin*, appears from *Courts being erected by Consent in the Apostles Days*, *for the Management and Conduct of them.*

Now that such Courts were then erected, I shall shew from *two* Places; one of St. *Paul*, wherein

wherein he *prescribes them*; and another of St. *James*, wherein he makes *mention* of them.

1. It appears from one Place in St. *Paul*, wherein he *prescribes* them; and that is 1 *Cor.* vi. where he orders the *Corinthians* to appoint *Courts of Judgment* among themselves, that so they might have no Need to expose their Religion, by impleading one another before the *Heathen Tribunals*. *Do ye not know*, says he, *that the Saints shall judge the World? And if the World shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest Matters*, or *unworthy of the smallest Judicatures* *; *If then ye have Judgment of Things pertaining to this Life, or if ye have Recourse to secular Judicatures* †; go not before Unbelievers, but *set* some, yea, rather than Infidels, *those that are least esteemed*, or *set at nought in the Church* ‡, set them, I say, *to judge*, or *in the* ‖ *Chair of Judgment*, ver. 2, 3.

Thus doth he advise them to erect among themselves standing Courts by *Consent*, when, by Reason of the Civil Power being in Heathens Hands, they could not otherwise be supplied in their own Body with Seats of Judgment.

2. It appears also from another Place in St. *James*, wherein he makes *mention* of them: And that is *Jam.* ii. 2, 3, 4. *If there come into your Assembly* or *Synagogue* **, *a Man with a Gold Ring*, &c. into your *Assembly*, i. e. your *judicial Court*, where the Respect of Persons here taxed, was not to be permitted.

That the Word here rendered *Assembly* ††, or *Synagogue*, signifies sometimes more particularly

* Κριτηρίων ἐλαχίστων. † Ἐὰν μὲν βιωτικὰ. ‡ Ἐξουθενημένους. ‖ Τούτους καθίζετε. ** Συναγωγήν. †† Συναγωγή.

Court-

Court-Assemblies, and *judicial Consistories*, appears from *Mat.* x. 17. where our Saviour tells his Disciples of being *delivered up to Consistories, and scourged in their Synagogues* *, i. e. in their *Judgment Halls.* And so also *Mat.* xxii 34.

And that it ought to signify such *Consistories* and *Court-Assemblies* (which were then used both in *Ecclesiastical* and *Civil* Affairs) in this Place, appears both from the *Thing itself*, and from *several Particulars* here spoken of *these Assemblies*, which seem to determine it to that Signification.

The Thing itself, I say, *seems to require that we understand the Apostle in this Sense*, viz. *the Exclusion of Preference of Persons.* For in these Assemblies St. *James condemns all Respect of Persons*, and *Discrimination of Rich and Poor*, by giving *Honour* according to Peoples *Qualities*; which was unlawful only in *Judicatures*, but is a *Duty in Conversation* and *common Carriage.* For it is an *Apostolical Precept*, to *give Honour to whom Honour is due*, Rom. xiii. 7. And those *Servants* who have *believing Masters*, are forbid to withdraw any Thing of their worldly Respect, as presuming upon their spiritual Kindred; or to *honour them the less*, because they are become their *Brethren* in being *Believers*, 1 Tim. vi. 2. So that altho' in Judgment-Seats, not Mens *Qualities*, but *Causes* only ought to be respected; yet in other Assemblies, a Regard may be given to their Persons, and it is commendable so to do.

And *several Particulars here spoken of these Assemblies, seem to determine his Meaning to these Court-Assemblies.* For the *Offenders* here taxed with respecting Persons in these Assemblies, *are said to have a Footstool*, which belongs to *Chairs of State* and *Judicatures.*

* Ἐν ταῖς συναγωγαῖς.

For

For ſo the Apoſtle expreſſes himſelf, *ver.* 3. *Ye have Reſpect to him that wears the gay Cloathing, and ſay unto him, Sit thou here in a good Place; and ſay to the Poor, Stand thou there, or ſit under my Footſtool.* And this is a probable Intimation of their *Dignity* and *Authority* in the Place where they ſate. For *Footſtools* ordinarily are Appendages only of the *Chairs of great Perſons*, who have Power and Superiority over others, as of *Princes* on their *Thrones*, and *Judges* upon *Tribunals*.

They are ſaid alſo *to give evil Judgment*, i. e. to paſs Sentence on the wrong Side, as he is like to do who tries not *Things*, but *Perſons*, and determines from *By-reſpects*, not from the *Merits of the Cauſe* which is to be decided. By this *Reſpect of Perſons*, ſays he, *Ye are become Judges of evil Thoughts*, i. e. you give evil and preverſe Judgments, *ver.* 4.

They are likewiſe ſaid to *paſs Sentence on the poor Man's Cauſe, without deliberating on it, or debating it. Ye ſay to the Rich*, ſaith he, *Sit thou here*; *and to the Poor, Stand thou at a* Diſtance *there:* * *And ye are not doubtful*, or *debate his Cauſe in* or † among *yourſelves, but are Judges of evil Thoughts*, or give perverſe Judgments; for ſo the Words are moſt naturally rendred, and not,

* *So the* Greek *is literally to be rendered. The Words are* οὐ διεκρίθητε ἐν ἑαυτοῖς, and ye have not diſputed it among yourſelves, *not,* are ye not partial in yourſelves? *By way of Interrogation, as we tranſlate it. For* οὐ *is wont to ask a Queſtion, only when it is put* firſt, *not when it has another Word before it, as* οὐ *is here. And* διεκρίθητε *in the* Paſſive, *ſignifies not* ye have made a Difference, *or* acted partially, *which is expreſſed by the* Active διακρίνειν: *But* ye have not been in doubt *or* diſpute about it, *which is a Signification that agrees to it ordinarily. For ſo it is rendered,* Mat. xxi. 21. Mark xi. 23. Rom. iv. 20. James i. 6. *and in other Places.*

† Ἐν ἑαυτοῖς.

as

as we do, *are ye not partial in yourselves, and Judges of evil Thoughts?* ver. 3, 4. And this shews plainly, that their *Respect of Persons* was expressed in *judicial Process*, in giving *rash Sentence* in Favour of the *Rich*, without ever staying to *hear the Plea*, or *weigh the Reasons* of the *Poors Cause*.

They are said in the last Place, *to trangress the Law in this regarding Persons*, and treating them differently, according to the Difference of their outward State and Condition. When in this different Carriage towards *Rich* and *Poor*, *ye have Respect of Persons*, says he, *ye commit Sin, and are convinced of the Law*, which plainly forbids such Practice, *as Transgressors, ver.* 3, 9. And this seems clearly to restrain it to their *Court-Assemblies*. For in *Judgment* there is a Law forbidding all Respect of Persons, *Ye shall not respect Persons in Judgment, but ye shall hear the Small as well as the Great*, Deut. i. 17. and *Lev.* xix. 15. But there is no Law that forbids it, yea, rather, since St. *Paul* enjoins us to *give Honour* where *Honour is due*, and directs *Servants* to pay never the *less*, but rather *more Reverence to their Masters, because they are Believers*, and would not have * *Confusion* introduced, but *Order* kept up in the *Church*, as well as in *other* Places, there may seem enough, not only to *warrant*, but to *recommend* it in *all other* Cases. Besides, what is still a farther Evidence of this Point, they are said particularly to transgress the Law in bidding *the Rich to sit, and the Poor to stand*, ver. 3, 9. which, as a † great Man observes, was a Thing expresly forbid by a *Canon* of the *Jews* to all who sate in Judgment. For that required in all *Suits* and *judicial Trials* betwixt *Rich* and *Poor*, that either *both should*

* 1 Cor. xiv. 13. † *Dr.* Ham. Annot. *in* loc.

stand,

ſtand, or *both ſhould ſit*. Which is a Thing, as he adds, that the *Jews* obſerve at this Day in hearing Cauſes; for there, if one preſuming upon his Quality, *takes a Seat*, the *Judge* preſently ſays to the other, *Sit thou down alſo.*

And thus I think it appears, that the *Aſſemblies*, which St. *James* mentions in this intricate Place, are *Court-Aſſemblies*, and *Judicial Conſiſtories*; both becauſe *the Nature of the Thing ſeems to require it*, *viz.* the Excluſion of all *Preference* or *Reſpect of Perſons*, which is taxed in theſe Courts, but is not cenſurable elſewhere, and alſo becauſe he ſays ſeveral Things of *theſe Aſſemblies*, which ſeem to determine his Diſcourſe to *Aſſemblies of Judicature*. For they are ſaid to be *ſuch Aſſemblies*, wherein *is a Foot-ſtool*, the uſual Appendant to *Chairs of State*, and *Seats of Judgment*; wherein *Men were Judges of evil Thoughts*, i. e. *judged wrong*, and *gave perverſe Sentence*; wherein *they condemned the poor Man's Cauſe without deliberating on it*, and *debating it*; wherein to *reſpect Perſons* was forbid by *a plain Law*, as we find there is a very expreſs one forbidding it in *judicial* Proceedings, but none at all, nay, rather the contrary in all *other Caſes*; and, laſtly, ſuch wherein to *bid a rich Man ſit*, *and a poor Man ſtand*, *was a Tranſgreſſion of a Precept*, as in *Court Aſſemblies* it was plainly, being an *expreſs Canon of the* Jews *in Judgment*. By all which I ſuppoſe it may appear, that *judicial Conſiſtories* are the *Aſſemblies* here intended.

Thus were Judicatures *preſcribed*, and *ordinarily uſed* in the Apoſtles Days. St. *Paul* appoints the *Corinthians* to erect them; and St. *James* makes mention of them as of an ordinary Thing among them; and that too without paſſing any Mark of Diſlike upon the Courts themſelves, when he blames

blames that Partiality and Reſpect of Perſons which the Judges ſhewed therein. Theſe *Judicatures*, indeed, were erected by their *own Conſent* among themſelves; and were not impoſed on them by *Power* and *Authority*, as other *legal Tribunals* are. But they ſerv'd for the ſame End of *hearing Cauſes*, and *paſſing ſuch Sentence as ſhould take Effect*, and *put an End to Controverſies*, as other *Judgment Seats* do; ſo that the ſame Thing was done by them in ſuing in *their* Courts, which is now done by us in ſuing in *ours*. In our *Judgment Halls*, it is true, where Things are managed by Advocates, who oftentimes ſeek *Conqueſt* and not *Juſtice*, and ranſack all Reſerves of Law to ſupport an unrighteous Cauſe, as long as *Craft* can do it; there is more Room for ill Arts, which bring more Sin into our *Pleadings*. But that is not a Fault inſeparable from *Suits*, but is the Sin of *Managers*; it lies not naturally *upon the Thing*, but only upon the *contingent Circumſtances* and *Manner of doing*; ſo that if we are careful to keep it free from them, a Suit in itſelf may ſtill be innocent, and carried on as lawfully in our Courts, as it was in thoſe of the Apoſtles Days.

And as this Lawfulneſs of Judicial Proceſs, appears from theſe *legal Courts* erected *to miniſter to it* in the Apoſtle's Days; ſo doth it yet farther,

5. From *the Practice of our Bleſſed Saviour*, *and* of *St.* Paul, *who both claimed the Benefit of it*; *and thereby plainly warranted and authorized it.*

Our *Bleſſed Lord himſelf*, I ſay, *claimed the Benefit of it*. For when the Officer, in the *High Prieſt's* Preſence, *ſtruck him with the Palm of his Hand*, he openly complains of the Illegality of the Act, and expoſtulates before him for a Redreſs thereof. *If I have ſpoken Evil*, ſays he, teſtify

againſt me, and *bear Witneſs of the Evil*; *but if well, why ſmiteſt thou me?* John xviii. 22, 23.

And after him St. *Paul* was not afraid to plead his own Cauſe, and ſerve himſelf of Law, when others went about to uſe him with Violence, contrary to it. For when the chief Captain ordered him to be *ſcourged uncondemned*, he pleads the *legal Privilege* of a *Roman*, who ought not to be treated ſo, *Acts* xxii. 24, 25. And when the Magiſtrates of *Philippi*, contrary to a Law and Privilege, had *ſcourged him* and *Silas*, without any Hearing of their Cauſe; he threatens them for it, and would not put it up, unleſs in Compenſation they would *come themſelves* in Perſon to *releaſe them out of Priſon*, and do them Honour before all the Multitude, *Acts* xvi. 36, 37, 38, 39. Nay, he uſes all *wiſe Arts of Law* to maintain a *righteous Cauſe*, and when he was not like to have *Juſtice* done him in one *Court*, *he proteſts* againſt *it*, and claims the Benefit of *Appeal* to *another*. For *when* Feſtus, *willing to do the* Jews *a Pleaſure*, would have had him *go up* to be *judg'd before him at* Jeruſalem, *in the Way* whereto the Jews *had deſign'd to murder him*; he anſwered, *I ſtand at* Cæſar's *Judgment Seat*, *where I ought to be judged*; *if I have committed any Thing worthy of Death*, *I refuſe not to die*; *but if there be none of theſe Things whereof theſe accuſe me*, *as thou very well knoweſt* the Law of the Empire is my Protection, and *no Man may deliver me unto them*, *I appeal unto* Cæſar, *Acts* xxv. 3, 9, 10, 11.

And thus, from all theſe Conſiderations it appears, that a Suit *at Law* is not a Thing unalterably evil, and *unlawful in itſelf*; but may very innocently be carried on, if on Sin mixes with it to turn it into a Tranſgreſſion. It is a Thing which God has allowed when we have *juſt Cauſe* for it, and

and are guilty of *no Vice* in the *Courſe* and *Conduct* thereof. For he *himſelf has put us into a Neceſſity of it*, and *has appointed the Magiſtrate's Office for it*, and *takes upon himſelf the juſt Judgment which is given therein*; and, when Chriſtians became a diſtinct Body, *Courts were ſet up by the Order of the Apoſtles themſelves, to miniſter to Judicial Proceſs*; and, as it fell in their Way, our *Bleſſed Lord*, and St. *Paul* too, *have ſerv'd their own Turns thereby*. By all which it is plain, that a Courſe of *Law* may ſometimes be innocently uſed, ſince otherwiſe *God* and theſe *Good Men*, could never have been thus concerned about it.

But againſt all this ſome may urge *two* Places, which ſeem to take away all Suits among Chriſtians, and to forbid all legal Defence, by requiring a patient Sufferance of all Loſſes and Indignities, which ſhould occaſion them. *One* is, *Mat.* v. 39. in Point of *Indignities*; the *other* is *Mat.* v. 40. and 1 *Cor.* vi. 7. in Point of *Loſſes* and *Spoil of Goods*. And if both theſe muſt be ſuffered with *Patience*, without any legal Defence or Righting of ourſelves; what is there left to be Matter of Civil Cauſes, for us to ſue and contend for?

Theſe Pleas ſeem fair, and therefore it is fit they ſhould have an Anſwer.

One Place ſeems to forbid all *Suits* and *legal Righting of ourſelves*, in caſe of *Affronts* and *Indignities*; and that is, *Mat.* v. 38, 39. *Ye have heard*, ſays our Saviour, *that it hath been ſaid* in the Law of *Moſes*, *an Eye for an Eye, and a Tooth for a Tooth:* i. e. When any one had offered theſe Violences to them, they were allowed by judicial Proceſs (this Law of Retaliation being directed to the Judges, *Exod.* xxi. 23, 24.) to inflict the very ſame on them again. *But* in Oppoſition to this,

I say unto you, resist not Evil, or the evil Man *, not only forcibly by private Violence, but also legally by publick Process, for so the Word † rendered *Resist* sometimes ‡ signifies, and its Opposition to these legal Retaliations among the *Jews* here imports. *But whosoever shall smite thee on the right Cheek, turn to him the other.* And so again in case of *Losses and Spoil of Goods*, ver. 40. *If any Man will sue thee at the Law, and take away thy Coat*, or ‖ inner Garment; rather than contend with him for that, hazard a further Loss, and *let him take thy Cloak* §, or upper Garment *also*. Conformable whereto the Apostle tells the *Corinthians*, that they *are utterly in a Fault, in not suffering themselves to be defrauded*, but seeking Remedy by a Suit, or *going to* Law at all, 1 *Cor.* vi. 7.

Now in Answer to these Places, I observe,

1. That *they are not meant literally, and absolutely, of turning the Cheek to all Smiters, or yielding our Goods to all ravenous Incroachers; nor forbid us at any time to serve ourselves of Law, when we are brought before Tribunals.* For this our *Blessed Lord* himself did, as we have seen when the *Officer struck him before the High-Priest*; he offers not himself for another Blow, but argues against the Illegality of what he had received already, *John* xviii. 22, 23. And this St. *Paul* did, when the *chief Captain* would have scourged him uncondemned; he pleads the Privilege of a *Roman*, which ought to secure him from being so hardly treated, *Acts* xxii. 25.

* Τῷ πονηρῷ. † Ἀνθιστῆναι.

‡ *As*, Jer. xlix. 19. who will appoint me the Time, *or as it is rendered in the Margin*, convent me to plead; *which the* LXX *express by* Τίς ἀντιστήσεταί μοι; *And so again*, Chap. l. 44.

‖ Χιτῶνα. § Ἱμάτιον.

And

And this he did again, when *Festus* would have sent him to *Jerusalem* to be *tried*; he *appeals to* Cæsar, and claims the Benefit of *his Judgment-Seat, where he ought to be judged*, Acts xxv. 9, 10, 11. They did not invite fresh Injuries, by laying themselves open to them; but stood upon their own Defence, and legally withstood them. So that these Precepts, are not to be taken in the literal Compass (in which Sense St. *Paul*, yea, and *Christ himself* too, would have been Transgressors) nor so as to forbid us to serve ourselves of Law at any Time when we are brought before Tribunals: Since St. *Paul*, who very well understood them, nay, our Blessed *Lord*, who to the Height fulfilled them, have *taught* and *authorized* us by their Example to serve ourselves thereof.

Nay, they *do not forbid us in all Cases to bring others before Magistrates, and seek unto Judicatories to right ourselves:* For St. *Paul* did something towards this, in his Contest with the *Philippian Magistrates*. Where, though he was an Offender against the Laws, yet in regard they had treated him illegally, in scourging *him* and *Silas* uncondemned, against the Privilege of *Romans*, he terrifies them with their illegal Proceedings, and would not put it up, till they compounded with him upon his own Terms, and brought him honourably out of Prison, in the Eyes of all the Citizens, *Acts* xvi. 36, 37, 38, 39. Besides, as I have already shewn, that this seeking to Judicatures is sometimes lawful among Christians, is evident from the *Law-Courts* in the *Apostles Days*, which were prescribed by the Apostles themselves for this very Purpose; it is clear, from its own *Necessity*, since there is no living in this World, for honest and conscientious Men, without it; from *God's* having *appointed an Officer* on purpose, the *Magistrate* I mean, to take

Care of it; and from his taking a *juſt Law Determination* upon himſelf, as if he were the *Author* thereof. So that *ſome ſeeking unto Courts*, and judicial Endeavours to right ourſelves, are ſtill *innocent*; and therefore *all* cannot be here *prohibited*.

As for theſe Places then, they are not meant *literally* and *abſolutely* of *turning our Cheek to all Smiters*, or of *yielding our Goods to all ravenous Encroachers:* They do not forbid us at *any Time* to ſerve ourſelves of Law, when others *unjuſtly implead us*; nor at *all Times* to *ſeek unto Magiſtrates*, and *implead others*. But,

2. They *are meant proverbially*, *and only forbid MOVING Suits in lighter Loſſes and Indignities, ſuch as our Lord there mentions*; *or making Law the Miniſter of Revenge in any others which are of more Importance*.

They *require Patience*, and *forbid MOVING Suits in lighter Loſſes and Indignities*. To *turn the Cheek to a Smiter*, is a *proverbial* Speech, which denotes our *calm Endurance* and *patient bearing of Injuries*. And ſo the afflicted Man's patient Carriage is expreſſed, *Lam.* iii.—*he giveth his Cheek to him that ſmiteth him*, ver. 30. And to let him that *ſues for the Coat*, i. e. the * Shirt or inner Garment, *take the Cloak alſo*, is a *proverbial Phraſe* too (for in the Truth of the Letter, a Shirt is no likely Matter of a Law-Suit) and ſignifies an *unconteſting Sufferance of ſuch ſmall Loſſes*, though that may expoſe us to bear ſome *others*, and thoſe more *weighty* ones. So that when our Saviour bids us *give the other Cheek to the Smiter*, and the *upper Garment to him that has taken away the inner*, i. e. to venture the inviting him to a *ſecond* Injury by his Succeſs, rather than to ingage in Variance:

* χλῶνα.

His

His Meaning is, that in *these*, or such other *light* Injuries, which either leave *no permanent Effect*, or only such as may be borne without any *great Prejudice*, we should exercise our *Patience*, and not go to Law, either to *recompence* the *past*, or to *prevent future* Sufferings. And therefore if in these *smaller Matters* we enter Actions, and implead others, that indeed is our *Sin*; since here he enjoins us *charitably* and *patiently* to bear them, and not to commence Suits for them; as I shall shew more fully hereafter in its proper Place.

And as they forbid *all Suits* in *these* smaller Matters; so do they all *Malice*, and *making the Law the Instrument of Revenge in any others which are of more Importance. Ye have heard*, saith our Saviour, *that it hath been said an Eye for an Eye, and a Tooth for a Tooth*, i. e. they who had suffered Evil, were allowed in Course of Law to return it, when as in these Instances mentioned, they had no other Benefit thereby, but only the Pleasure of seeing him smart who had occasioned their Sufferings; which is properly revenging the Injury they had received, for to *revenge* an Injury, is in *Hatred to return it. But in Opposition* to this, *I say unto you* (so that Revenge being the Thing there allowed, it must also in this Opposition be the Thing here prohibited) *resist not Evil*, i. e. in any kind of Resistance, which is revenging it as they might: *But whosoever shall smite thee on the right Cheek, turn to him the other*, &c. *i. e.* Be readier to suffer another Injury, than spitefully to commence a Suit, or in any sort to revenge that which is received already, *ver.* 38, 39, 40.

As for this Place in St. *Matthew* then, it forbids us not to *defend ourselves* by Law in *any* Case, nor in *all* Cases, to *bring an Action*, and *implead others*. But it only forbids Suits in *lighter Losses* and *Indig-*

nities, such as our Lord there mentions, and making the Law the *Instrument of Revenge in weightier Matters.*

And the same is to be said of that Passage of St. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* vi. where after having taxed both the Sin and Scandal of impleading each other before Unbelievers, he adds moreover: *Now there is utterly a Fault among you, because ye go to Law one with another. Why do ye not rather take Wrong? Why do ye not suffer yourselves to be defrauded?* ver. 7. In which Words the Apostle doth not speak as a Publisher of a new Law, but only as a Teacher and Monitor of what his Lord and Master had taught before. And the Words are not to be taken in their utmost Latitude, more than the forementioned Words of our Blessed Saviour were, or made to forbid this Way of legal Defence of one Christian against another, universally and in all Cases: But they are to be restrained to little Causes, as a Prohibition against Litigiousness, or running to Law, as the *Corinthians* then were wont to do, for light and tolerable Injuries.

This *Littleness of their Causes*, he taxes, ver. 2. *If the World shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest Matters?* or, according to the more literal Rendring, * *in the smallest* Judicatures, *i. e.* in Courts set up for hearing or determining small Causes? And he refers to it again, I conceive, *ver.* 4. when he sends them for Arbitrations and Decisions of the Differences then current among them, to *those who are least esteemed in the Church*, *i. e.* to those of the least Note, not in the Rank of Christians, but † in the Rank of Judges, or to such inferiour Courts, or Arbitrators, as set to hear and decide the lowest or slightest Matters.

* Κριτηρίων ἐλαχίστων. † *See Dr.* Lightf. *Hor. Heb. in loc.*

And

And indeed these *Corinthians*, whose Law Suits he here condemns, seem at that Time to have been very litigious, and apt to quarrel, or go to Law on small and slender Pretences. The Apostle taxes them for their Contentiousness in his *two Epistles* to them. And in this Place he reproves them, as Persons who were ready to make use of Law, not only to redress Injuries, but also to commit them, and who were neither willing to do Right nor to take Wrong. Instead of *suffering yourselves to be defrauded*, saith he, *ye do Wrong, and defraud, and that your Brethren*, ver. 8. So that among those Persons, *going to Law was utterly a Fault*, being ordinarily on such Accounts, as were too light for the Hearing of Courts or Umpires, and should have exercised their Christian Charity and Patience. Indeed if we take away Suits for tolerable Injuries, and for Gratification of angry Passions, we should cut off the greatest Part of those Causes which are wont to trouble Courts, and to divide Neighbourhoods; and the ordinary State of Christians, would be a State of Peace and Patience, and Suits would become rare Things among them. And this Restraint and Inhibition of Suits at Law, *viz.* the Prohibition of going to Law ordinarily, by the usual Latitude of Speech in moral Rules and Maxims, which are uttered indefinitely, though they be intended only for the most Part, may be call'd by an indefinite Speech, *not going to Law*, as St. *Paul* calls it in this Place, or *not resisting Evil*, as our Blessed Lord was pleased to express himself when he spake thereof.

And in this Sense it might be said of the Primitive Christians, as *Athenagoras* doth, that * *when their Goods were taken away by Violence, they did*

* Παιόμενοι μὴ ἀντιτύπτειν, ἁρπαζόμενοι μὴ δικάζεσθαι. Athenag. Legat. *p.* 12.

not

not go to Law for Redreſs, becauſe they did not do it for any tolerable Injuries, which made up the Number of Actions that troubled the Courts, and were the common Cauſes of Suits to others. Beſides which, the greateſt Part of the Violences they fell under, were Loſſes for their Religion, which the Heathens took Occaſion to offer and put upon 'em, becauſe they were under a general Odium, and inſtead of puniſhing the Magiſtrates, might be willing to connive, or ſometimes to encourage what was done againſt them; which Sufferings coming on on them for his Cauſe, and with ſuch Countenance both from Courts and Rulers, they did not ſeek to redreſs them by Law, but bore them with Patience, and truſted to God for their Recompence.

As for theſe Places then, which ſeem to forbid Suits, either on *Loſſes* or *Indignities*, they do not forbid them *abſolutely*, and in *all* Caſes. They only forbid us to fly to them in *ſmaller* Matters, ſuch as our Saviour mentions; or to make them a *Means of Revenge* in *great Ones*. So that there is ſtill Room left for *Suits at Law* in Caſe of greater Injuries; which, although all good Men may and will ſeveral Times put up, without ſeeking a legal Redreſs, when by ſuch patient Sufferance they can ſerve the Purpoſes of Piety and Prudence: yet, when the Aſſertion, or Proſecution of their own juſt Rights therein, is of conſiderable Account to themſelves or their Families, or is fit and requiſite for wiſe and good Ends; they may ſafely call in the Help of Law to indemnify themſelves, and ſeek to Courts without any Offence to God, or Wrong to a good Conſcience.

And thus it appears, that Suits at *Law* are not *ſinful in themſelves*, but may lawfully be uſed, if there is no Unlawfulneſs in the *Ground*, and *Way of Management*. The Thing itſelf has no Sin in it, and

and so may be innocent, if we take Care that no other Sin doth adhere to it. So that barely to try a Title, is no Matter of any Man's Account, nor has any Offence in it all.

But although Suits *at Law* are not thus unlawful in themselves, but may sometimes be innocent: Yet as I said,

2. They *are our Sin, and a Matter of our Account, when they are either enter'd upon an unjustifiable Ground, or are carried on by a sinful Management.*

1. I say, *Suits at* Law *are our Sin,* and *a Matter of our Account, when they are begun upon an unjustifiable Ground.*

It is not every Cause that usually *begets* it, which can *warrant* and *justify a Law Suit before God.* For sometimes Men are led on to it only by *Revenge,* when they have no lasting Damage to be repaired, but seek only their Brother's Smart, and to be even with him who occasioned theirs: And then the Suit must needs be unlawful, having a *Sin* at the Bottom of it. And at other Times, when there is a *real Damage,* yet it is so *trivial,* as that the Making of it up will not countervail the Evils and Temptations of a Suit: and then it will be sinful still, as wanting a Ground of so much Weight, as can bear the Burthen of it. For a Trial *at Law,* besides its being a *costly* and *painful* Thing, is also a very *perillous State,* and a *dangerous Temptation.* It will be sure to put the Person whom *we sue,* to much *Trouble* and *Pains,* in *collecting and examining Evidences, preparing Witnesses, informing Advocates,* and *attending Courts,* which is Toil in itself, and an Hindrance to better Business; and in the whole Course and Conduct of it, it will put him to *constant Charges* and *Expence.* And it will be a *State of great Temptation,*

tion, both to *him* and to *ourſelves*, inſnaring us, unleſs we are very circumſpect to prevent the ſame, into *covetous Wiſhes*, or *Delays of Juſtice*, or *vexatious Arts*, or *uncharitable Surmiſes*, and *revengeful Thoughts*, or *deceitful Suggeſtions* and *Falſifications*, *hypocritically diſguiſing* the *Weakneſs of* our *own* Cauſe, or *unreaſonably aggravating* the Flaws of *our Adverſaries* to our own Profit and his Prejudice, and the like. Theſe Sins are ever before Men whilſt a Suit is depending; they have conſtant Opportunities for them, and are perpetually provoked to them; and it muſt be a *great Conduct* and *Proof*, both of their *Skill* and *Care*, that muſt preſerve them from being intangled and ingaged in them. And ſince there is ſo *much Toil attending* a Law Suit, ſo *great Charge occaſion'd by it*, and ſo *many Temptations* and *great Dangers*, both to our *own Souls*, and our *Brother's*, *laid in the Way* thereof; it muſt not be a *light* Thing, but a *weighty* Cauſe indeed, which can over-balance all theſe Conſiderations, and juſtly draw us to commence it.

But in this Point to be more Particular. Suits are *unlawfully* entred, when they are begun, either,

1. *For Revenge, and not for Reparation of Damages. Or,*

2. When for *Reparation* only of *ſmall Things, which cannot countervail the Evil and Hazard of a Suit, but ought to exerciſe our Patience and Forgiveneſs*, and ſo *be put up without Recourſe to Judicatures.*

1ſt. I ſay, Suits are *unlawfully entred*, when they are *Vindictive*, not *Reparative*, and are *begun only for Revenge*, not *for Reparation of Damages.* And this they always are, when they are commenced either againſt *inſolvent Perſons*; or *upon ſuch Words and Actions againſt others, for which*, beſides *Coſts*,

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no Damages that are *valuable, are like to be allowed us.*

They are not *reparative*, but *vindictive*, when they are commenced againſt *inſolvent Perſons.* When we *ſue a poor* Man, who cannot pay what he owes, or recompence the Wrongs which he has done us, it is not that our own Sore may be heal'd, but only that his Smart may be wrought by the legal Proceſs. For the Law doth not make him coin Money who has it not, but only forces him to pay it, who has it, but will not part with it. To put a *Beggar* in Priſon, and run him out at Law to the utmoſt, is not the Way to put Money in his Pocket; ſo that when we have to do with ſuch a Perſon, it is only Revenge upon him, and not the Compenſation of our Loſs, which we can propoſe to ourſelves thereby. If we go to right ourſelves by the Law then upon an inſolvent Man, we go only to return the Hurt which he has done, and to be even with him. And this is a great Inſtance of an *hard Heart*, and a *ſpiteful Spirit*; and is quite contrary to that *brotherly Kindneſs*, *Compaſſion*, and *Forgiveneſs*, which how *unworthy* ſoever he may be of it, yet, ſo long as the *Miſery* of *his Caſe* requires it, God has enjoyn'd us to uſe towards him. It is exactly to deal with *him*, as the *wicked Man* did with his *inſolvent Brother* in the *Parable*, which provoked God to return the ſame Rigor upon his own Head again. For when *he owed his Lord ten thouſand Talents, he freely forgave him* that great *Debt*, becauſe he was *not able to pay it.* But when his *Fellow-Servant*, who *owed him* only *an hundred Pence*, could not tender down that ſmall Sum when he demanded the ſame, he ſhewed nothing of that Compaſſion towards this poor Man which God had ſhewn towards him, but *laid Hands on him, and caſt him into Priſon till Payment*

Payment ſhould be made. But when the *Fellow-Servants* told this *to their Lord*, he reſolves to deal with him in his own Way, and ſtrictly *exacts* that Debt, which otherwiſe he intended freely to have *acquitted*, *delivering him*, as he had done *his Brother*, *to the Tormentors*, till all ſhould be diſcharged. And *ſo likewiſe ſhall my heavenly Father do to you*, ſays our Saviour, *if ye from your Hearts forgive not every one his Brother their Treſpaſſes*, Mat. xviii. *ver.* 24. to *chap.* 19.

And what I have here ſaid of inſolvent Perſons, has Place likewiſe more or leſs, according to the Degree of their Neceſſity and of our Ability, in others whom we are obliged in Charity to ſpare. A good Chriſtian muſt be a charitable Perſon, who muſt avoid doing, not only an unjuſt, but alſo a rigorous and hard Thing. And in righting of himſelf, he muſt conſider, not only what ſatisfies his own juſt Claims from others, but alſo what ſuits with his Ability and Chriſtian Obligation of ſhewing Compaſſion towards them. And therefore in legal Seiſures and righting himſelf on thoſe, who, tho' not perfectly inſolvent, are yet very neceſſitous, a good Man will not be haſty in going to Extremities; nor, when he doth, will he take all away from them, and neither leave them Cloaths to wear, nor a Bed to lie on. He will deal with them with Moderation and Tenderneſs, and have a due Regard to the Supply of their Needs, as well as to the Satisfaction of his own Claims. Being put to right himſelf upon the Needy, he will look upon it as a Call from God to Charity, and make compaſſionate Abatements, more or leſs, according as he has more or leſs of that noble Diſpoſition, which in Tenderneſs for others, as St. *Paul* ſays, *ſeeks not her own*, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 5. and according as his own Ability, and the Degree of their Neceſſity may require. But

But if they are commenced againſt *reſponſible* Perſons, they are not *reparative*, but *vindictive* ſtill, if they are *upon ſuch Words or Actions, for which* beſides *Coſts*, no *Damages* that are valuable *are like to be allowed us.* A great Number of Suits are for *abuſive Words*, or a *Box on the Ear*, or other *trivial* Matters, which leave no *permanent ill Effects*, but if our *Paſſions* may be withheld from eſtimating them, paſs off without making us the *worſe*, or doing us *any Prejudice.* And in all theſe, ſince there is no Damage that ſticks to us, there is no *Need* of any Reparations. So that if we begin Suits, it is not to *indemnify ourſelves*, but to be *vexatious*, and *afflict others who have afflicted us*, wherein conſiſts the very Nature of *Revenge.*

And this is always *unlawful*, and moſt expreſly forbidden to all us *Chriſtians:* To the *Jews*, indeed, it was allowed in the *Old Teſtament:* For they were permitted to *return Ill for Ill*, and to demand *an Eye for an Eye*, and *a Tooth for a Tooth*, when thereby their own loſt Member was not reſtored, but only their Adverſary's was ſent after it, and, bating the Pleaſure of Revenge, they reaped no other Benefit by it, *Mat.* v. 38. But this is moſt ſtrictly forbidden to all us *Chriſtians* in the *New Teſtament.* For we are taught to *recompence to no Man Evil for Evil, but to overcome Evil with Good*, Rom. xii. 17, 20, 21. —— to *forgive thoſe that treſpaſs againſt us*, i. e. not to return their injurious or hard Uſage, as ever we expect *Forgiveneſs of our own Treſpaſſes at God's Hands*, Mat. vi. 12, 14, 15. And particularly in Oppoſition to this *going to Law for Revenge*, our Saviour forbids us *judicially* to *reſiſt the evil Man*, as has been ſhewn, *i. e.* in Courſe of Law, to return the Evil on him, as by Virtue of that Rule,

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an Eye for an Eye, &c. the *Jews* did: But, inſtead of that, by the Phraſe of turning *one Cheek to him who has ſtruck the other*, he requires that we patiently ſubmit, and ſit down under it, *Mat.* v. 38, 39, 40.

This then is the *firſt* Thing which God requires to the Lawfulneſs of all judicial Trials, *viz.* they muſt never be *vindictive* but *reparative*, and we muſt not ſue another in order to *his Smart and Prejudice*, but only to *heal* or *ſecure our own ſelves*, either by *holding* the *Goods* which he *claims* from us, or by *repairing* the *Loſs*, which he has *occaſioned* to us.

2. Suits for *Reparation of Loſſes* are unlawful, when the Reparations are only of *ſmall Things*, *which cannot countervail the Evils and Hazards of a Suit*, but ought to exerciſe our *Patience* and *Forgiveneſs*, and ſo be quietly put up without Recourſe thereto.

In the Courſe of *ſecular Wiſdom*, indeed, which looks only to ſecure the Concerns of *this World*, when Men are *rich* or *potent*, and have Wealth and Intereſt enough to go thro' therewith, the *ſmalleſt Affronts* or *Infringment of their juſt Power* and *Privilege*, are often-times eſteemed a ſufficient Occaſion of a *Law-ſuit*. For thereby they think they ſtop the *firſt Breach* in their *own Right*, which, if it be ſuffered to be once made, as it is in the Breach of a *Water-Bank*, or a *fortified Wall*, it is after that a much eaſier Thing to widen it. They *check* an *incroaching Humour* in the Bud, before it has got Heart, or Ground enough to make a greater Conteſt. And they ſhew the World that they are not of a *yielding Temper* which will be *wrong'd* or *baffled*; and thereby ſtrike an Awe, which will keep all others from attempting them, and purchaſe their own Quiet. Upon theſe, or ſuch

ſuch like *ſecular Maxims*, when nothing but the Intereſt of this World guides Men, they many Times conclude that the ſlighteſt Wrongs are not to be put up; and therefore, when in any trivial Thing their Right is invaded, they betake themſelves to Courſe of Law, for Maintenance and Vindication thereof.

But in *Religion* the Caſe is alter'd. For that ſeeks not only what is fit to *ſecure ourſelves*, and maintain our *worldly Rights*; but what is fit to maintain an *univerſal Innocence*, and to ſhew *Charity* towards *others*. Its main Work lies in leſſening the Love of this World, and making us eaſy to part with any Enjoyment of this Life, when it becomes inconſiſtent with any Duty, and indangers our Paſſage to a better. And therefore, altho' *ſecular Wiſdom* would, perhaps, ſometimes adviſe us, yet will *true Religion* altogether forbid us to go to *Law* for *trivial Loſſes*. For a Suit at Law, as I have noted, will put our *Adverſary* to great *Coſt* and *Pains*; and ſince in Chriſtianity he is our *Neighbour* and our *Brother*, this we ought not to do for little Things, whereby we ſhall not gain near ſo much as he loſes; for this is not according to the Commandment, *to love him as ourſelves*, Mat. xxii. 39. Nay, it will be a *great Snare* both to *his* Virtue and *ours*; for altho' it be no State of *direct Sin*, yet it is a State of very *dangerous Temptation*, there being ſo many Ways to offend while a Suit is carrying on, and it being ſo very hard to avoid them without great Conduct and Circumſpection. And this alſo we *ought* not lightly to caſt either in the Way of our *own* Souls, or of our *Brother*'s. Yea, we *ſhall* not do it, if we have any of that *tender Love* and *Care for Souls* which *Chriſt* has ſhew'd, and which he requires *us* to ſhew, when, upon a Proſpect of ſaving them, he

commands us not only to *bear a Reproach*, or to *part with our Substance*, but even *to lay down our own Lives for others*, 1 John iii. 16.

Thus, when the Damages to be repaired are but of *small* Account, and the Trouble and Charges of the Suit will take much more from him than we are like to get by it; out of our *tender Care* of *all Persons*, whom God commands us to *love as we do ourselves*; and out of our *Love* to *each other's Souls*, and a Desire to keep both *ourselves* and *them* from *dangerous Temptations*, which would rob us of our *Innocence* (a Thing that ought not to be hazarded for *trifling* Regards) we ought *patiently to bear* the Loss, and not seek out by Law to redress it. And this, as I have intimated, is what our Saviour has expressly commanded, Mat. v. *If one smite thee on the right Cheek*, which is a tolerable Affront, *turn to him the other also*, or expose thyself to be smitten again, rather than resist it judicially. *And if any Man sue thee at the Law, to take away thy Coat*, or inner Garment, a Thing that may easily be spared, hazard an higher Loss, and *let him take thy Cloak also*, rather than sue to regain it, *ver.* 38, 39, 40. So that rather than sue to recover little Matters, and enter Actions for small Reparations; we must be content to want them, and sit down without any Repairs at all.

And in rating, when Things are thus *little* and *frivolous*, we must not judge by our own *Pride* and *Passions*, which count nothing little, but aggrandize every Affront or Injury that is done to our own selves: But by the *Reality of Things*, and according as we *ourselves* should judge, were we humble and dispassionate, or as they would be judged of by *other holy* and *indifferent Persons*. Our own *Pride*, and the *Opinions of the World*,

World, would whiſper to us, that *every Treſpaſs againſt us* is *intolerable*, and *deſerves a Proceſs*; every *Imputation of a Lie*, a *Stab*; and every *actionable Affront*, a *Suit* at leaſt, if not a *Challenge*. But *Pride* and *Paſſion*, and the *Opinions of the World*, muſt not be our Counſellors: For we *renounced* them at our *Baptiſm*, when we were firſt made Chriſtians; and if we would pleaſe God, they muſt not ſway us, but ought daily to be *mortified* and *ſubdued* in us. And ſince they are ſo much our *Sin*, and ſo directly againſt our *baptiſmal Vow* and *Profeſſion*; we muſt not think to excuſe ourſelves for going to Law on *little Loſſes* and *Indignities*, by ſaying they ſeemed great according to their Repreſentation of them. In judging then what are *little* Things, we muſt not be governed by our own *Pride and Paſſions*, but by the *Reality of Things*, and the Judgments of *diſpaſſionate*, *humble* Perſons. And this our Lord plainly ſhews, by ſetting down a *Box on the Ear*, (which in reality doth no Hurt, nor leaves any permanent Effect behind it) among thoſe *light* Indignities which ought not to be a Matter of a Suit, though every where the *Pride* and *Paſſions* of Men, and particularly at *that Time* the *Haughtineſs of the Jews*, thought it a great Thing, which ought by all Means to have Satisfaction made for it. For this, as a * learned Man obſerves, was their Rule about it. *Doth any Perſon give his Neighbour a Box on the Ear? let him give him a Shilling, yea,* ſays *Rabbi Judah, a Pound; or if it were upon the Cheek, let him give him two hundred* † *Zuzes to make Amends for it. Nay, if he give him another Box, he ought to give him four hundred to recompence*

* *Dr.* Lightf. Hor. Heb. *in* Mat. v. 39.
† i. e. *in* Engliſh *Coin*, 6 *l.* 5 *s.*

it. So *great* did they think the *Indignity* to a *Jewiſh Man*, eſteeming all their *own Nation*, as he obſerves from *Maimonides*, even thoſe of the *moſt beggarly Condition, to be Gentlemen*, becauſe they were all *the Children of* Abraham.

And thus it appears when a Suit is unlawful upon this *firſt* Account, *viz. its entring upon an unjuſtifiable Ground.* For ſuch it is in all Caſes, when we bring an Action only for *Revenge*, and not for *Reparation of Damages*; or when for the Reparation of ſuch *ſmall Things*, as ought not to expoſe us to all the *Evils* and *Temptations* of a *judicial Proceſs*, but to exerciſe our *Patience* and *Forgiveneſs*; which *Smallneſs* of Things is to be rated, not by Mens *Pride* and *Paſſions*, which eſteem no Ill ſmall that is done to themſelves, but by the *Reality of Things*, and the *Judgment of humble* and *diſpaſſionate* Perſons.

And this holds true, not only in Loſſes and Indignities offered to *ourſelves*; but alſo in the Caſe of *Truſt*, when they are offered to *others* who are committed to our Care and Guardianſhip. For when Suits are *ſinful*, as we have ſeen they are in the Caſe of *Revenge*, and of *lighter Affronts* and *Injuries*, which Chriſt commands us not to redreſs by Law, but to bear with Patience: I ſee no Difference, but an *equal Unlawfulneſs*, whether we ſue upon our *own*, or upon their Accounts. For ſurely our taking of a *Truſt*, doth not ingage us to *diſobey* our Lord, or do any *evil* Thing; but only to do all that for our Charge which we can do for them, as *good Chriſtians* and *honeſt Men.* And therefore in *lighter* Matters, when Suits are *ſinful*, we may no more *ſue* for them, than we can tell a *Lie*, or *ſwear* an unlawful *Oath*, or *over-reach* in their Cauſe, or be guilty of any *other Tranſgreſſion.* If they were come up to act in *their own Name*,

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in these Cases a *judicial Trial* would not be *lawful*, but a *Sin* in them: And where they themselves could not sue, we must not think that *we*, who act only as their *Proxies* and *Representatives*, may do it for them. If these Losses and Indignities, which are shewed to them, were offered to *ourselves*, we ought not to commence an Action, but to be patient under them; and they have no Reason in the World to think us wanting either in our *Trust*, or *Friendship*, when we do all that to the utmost in *their* Case, which we durst do in *our own*.

So far then as Suits are *sinful*, and the putting up Injuries without entring Actions for Reparation thereof is a *strict Duty*, as it plainly is in case of *lighter Losses* and *Indignities*; it equally obliges us in *Trust for others*, as in our *own Business*. Where it is no *Duty*, indeed, and where a Suit is not a *Sin*, though Forbearance might shew a greater Height of Christian Patience and Perfection, as it is sometimes in the Case of *greater Injuries*, there is a Difference; and though it were commendable still to refrain in our *own* Case, yet it is not in *theirs*. In the former Instances, to forbear is a *necessary* Point, having an express Precept for it; and necessary Things may be done for them by those who represent them, without their *own* Consent and Approbation. But in these Cases where it is no Sin, to forbear is no *necessary Duty*, but a *voluntary Act*: And it is no Part of our Trust to perform voluntary Heights, and unrequired Generosities at their Cost; but if these be done, they must be left to themselves, when, by making it a Matter of their *own Choice*, they themselves may have the *Virtue*, and the *Reward* of it. So far then, as the putting up an Injury without a Suit is no *strict Duty*, but only a *Free-will Offering*, and

a *voluntary Act*, it must not be done in *their* Case; though it were much to be commended in our own. But when Patience is a Duty, and Suits are *sinful*, whether it be *their* Concern, or *ours*, it matters not, for *both* are *equal*. We must be *faithful to our Lord*, and observe the Duties of *Patience*, *Peace*, *Forgiveness*, and all other Laws of God, in acting for *others* as well as for *ourselves*. So that when there is no justifiable Ground of Suit, we must abstain from it, whether it be for *publick* or *private* Ends, whether it be only our *Charge*, or *we* ourselves that are concerned therein. And this I have noted for the Use of those, who, I think, are much out in this Point. For there are several, who *would*, or at least *pretend they would* bear much in their *own Businesses*, who will bear nothing at all, and yet think they are not *litigious*, in commencing Suits for every Trifle, when they are in *Trust for others*.

But as some Suits are thus *unlawful*, because *they are upon an unjustifiable Ground*; so, when the *Grounds* are *good*, are others *unlawful*.

2. Because *they are carried on by a sinful Management*.

A Suit at Law is a very *dangerous State*, and has *strong Temptations* to several Sins accompanying it: And if, when there is *just* Cause for it, any of these are incurr'd in the *Management* thereof, it is our *Sin* still, and we shall be put to answer for it.

To shew what these are, and when Suits are unlawful upon this Account, I observe, that when we have an Action against any Man, we must for all that look upon him as our *Neighbour*, and *love him as ourselves*, paying him all that *Justice*, *Peace*, and *Charity*, which are due to all Persons. And this is hard to do, when Men pursue any *Controversies* wherein their Interest is concerned; especially, when they are *publick*, and, if they do not succeed,

ſucceed, the Eyes of the World look on to ſee them worſted, as it is in *Law-Suits*. For then *Conqueſt* is the End which is ordinarily ſought, and in Proſecution of that, Mens *Paſſions* generally are ingaged; and *both* theſe are oppoſite to the *Love of others*, and ſeek only to *pleaſe ourſelves*, and ſo puſh us on to tranſgreſs this great *Law of Charity* in ſeveral Inſtances. Where *Conqueſt* is the End, there is much *Emulation* and *Strife* to gain it; and where *Envy*, or Emulation * *and Strife is*, ſaith St. *James*, *there is Confuſion, and every evil Work*, James iii. 16. And where *Paſſion* is high, and *Anger* is once moved, there a *Law of Love* is not like to be obſerved; *for*, as the ſame Apoſtle ſays, *the Wrath of Man worketh not the Righteouſneſs of God*, James i. 20. And ſince Law-Suits generally *have* both theſe attending them, they do too often lead the *Litigants*, God knows, into many Breaches of *Juſtice*, *Peace*, and *Charity* towards each other, particularly into *theſe* following:

If their Cauſe is *bad*, they uſe *Delays* to tire out their Adverſaries; they *feign Pleas* to gain Time for themſelves, and *inſiſt* upon *Punctilio's* in his *Proceedings*, wholly *foreign* to the *Merits* of the Cauſe, to make him begin all afreſh, and hunt out all *Reſerves of Law to prolong the Suit*, and *ſuſpend* the *Sentence*. And this, beſides its being moſt *oppoſite* to *Love* and *Brotherly-kindneſs*, and being a Courſe moſt *uncharitable* and *vexatious*, is alſo a moſt *unjuſt* Thing, being a doing *Wrong* as far as in them lies, and endeavouring, what they can, to put an Hindrance and Stop to *Juſtice*.

And whether it be *good* or *bad*, they generally incur many *Sins* in purſuing their Cauſe, and fall

* Ζῆλος.

into ſundry Inſtances of *Injuſtice* and *Uncharitableneſs* to ſucceed in the ſame.

They have a *longing Deſire to overcome*, and to have the Verdict paſs for them, be it *Right* or *Wrong*; which is *coveting other Mens Goods*, againſt the Law of the *tenth* Commandment, *Exod.* xx. 17. And this diſpoſes them to *judge* all in *Favour* of their *own Right*, and to *fret* and *murmur* when they have loſt the Verdict, and to *ſuſpect* (if not *complain*) of *Injuſtice* in the *Judge* and *Jury*, who were concerned therein; againſt the plain Duty of *Patience*, *Reverence* to *Governors*, and *meek Submiſſion* under Judgment.

They watch their Opportunity to *take Advantage* of their Adverſary's *Over-ſight*, or to bring the Trial on at a Time when he doth not *expect* it, or is *unprepared* for it; which is not only againſt the great Law of *Charity*, that, as St. *Paul* ſaith, *ſeeks not her own* at other Mens Hurt, 1 *Cor.* xiii. 5. but alſo againſt *Juſtice*, which forbids defrauding, or *going beyond our Brother in any Matter*, when we can *over-reach* and *out-wit* him in the ſame, 1 *Theſſ.* iv. 6.

They ſuggeſt *falſe Pleas*, or ſupply Circumſtances out of their own Heads in favour of their own Cauſe, and, when a little more would do it, ſtretch beyond the Truth, to help out an Evidence, and make the Matter full to ſerve their Purpoſe; which is clearly againſt the Duty of *Simplicity*, and *ſpeaking the plain Truth with our Neighbour*.

They have an *inward Hatred* againſt their Adverſaries, which makes them *envious* at any Good, and glad of any Ill that doth befal them, eſpecially in the Proceſs of the Cauſe, and which renders them apt to *ſurmiſe ill Things* of them, and *defame* them as often as they can find a fit Occaſion

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ſo to do, and to watch all Opportunities of being *revenged* upon them, and to burſt out into *Anger* and *exaſperating Carriage*, *Strife*, and *Variance*, *Clamour* and *bitter Words* againſt them, upon any the leaſt Provocation. All which are directly contrary to the great Duty of Love and Charity, which *rejoices with them that do rejoice, and weeps with them that weep*; Rom. xii. 15. which *ſuffers long and is kind*, which *thinketh no Evil*, 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5. which *renders Good for Evil*, Rom. xii. 17, 21. which *puts away all Bitterneſs, and Wrath, and Anger, and Clamour, and Evil-ſpeaking, with all Malice*, Eph. iv. 31. and ingages us, ſo far as it is *poſſible, and as much as in us lies, to live peaceably with all Men*, Rom. xii. 18.

Laſtly, They love to be *vexatious*, and *cut out Work* for their *Adverſaries*, deferring a Trial ſeveral Terms for no other End, but to make them throw away both their Money and Pains in attending to prevent a Surpriſe; or putting them to prove needleſs Things, which influence not the Merits of the Cauſe; or inſiſting on every Fetch of Law, that may be an Hindrance in their Way, though it is no way neceſſary to the main Buſineſs; or ſtudying other miſchievous Arts of creating them Trouble, and being vexatious; which is abſolutely againſt the *loving of our Neighbour as ourſelves*, and having a *Brotherly-kindneſs*, and *doing Good as we have Opportunity to all Perſons*, Gal. vi. 10. and is that very Sin which St. *Paul* mentions, and which he expreſſes by *Wickedneſs* or *Miſchievouſneſs*, *i. e.* a Studying to do Miſchief, and make * Work for others, *Rom.* i. 29.

Thus, to mention no more, are all theſe *Prolongations of Suits, and Delays of Juſtice*, theſe *co-*

* Πονηρία ὁ ἐκ παρασκευῆς εἰς τινα παρὰ τὸ δίκαιον πόνον γινόμενον. *Suid.*

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vetous Desires, and *Acts of Impatience*, these *Arts of Circumvention* and *going beyond our Adversaries*, these *deceitful Suggestions* and *Falsifications in Pleadings*, these *mischievous* and *vexatious Ways*, this *Hatred*, *Envy*, *Evil-speakings* and *Surmises*, *Anger*, *Bitterness*, *Strife Clamour*, *Revenge*, &c. which are so ordinarily the Concomitants of judicial Causes, most unlawful and forbidden Things; so that whensoever we have any Suits depending, we sin in them, if any of these do intrude and mix therewith. A judicial Controversy that is begun upon a justifiable Ground, will not be innocent if it is carried on by so unjustifiable a Management. And therefore to clear our Consciences in all legal Trials, we must take care, not only that, after all *other* Means of righting ourselves have fail'd, the Suit be commenced for a *Thing of Weight*, which is a *justifiable Ground*; but also that it be pursued in Ways of all this *Justice*, *Charity*, and *Peace*, which makes a *justifiable Management*. For it is not enough that the Cause be good, unless the Manner of maintaining it be good too.

This, I must confess, is an hard Point, because in managing a Suit we are in the Way of so many Sins, and meet at every turn with strong Temptations, which must needs very much endanger us. For all the Way these Sins lie before us; so that unless we have a constant Care, we shall step into them. They generally serve our Ends, and set on the Cause; so that we are still under a Temptation to them. And, what thro' our own Interest and Desire of Conquest, what thro' the Opposition which is made, unless we are very circumspect, our Passions will be engaged; and then, more or less, we shall be hurried into the Commission of them. So that if no Suit be innocent where the Ground is good, except all these

Sins

Sins be avoided in the Management; it will be a very hard Thing, may ſome ſay, to ſue innocently, and appeal to Courts at all.

This, indeed, is very true, and I am ready to confeſs ſo too. For though ſome *even temper'd* Men, who are endowed not only with great *Goodneſs*, but alſo with great *Diſcretion* and *Government of themſelves*, may do it with ſome Eaſe, and not find it *very difficult*; yet are thoſe Men very few in Number, who are ſo well ſet out, and qualified for an irreprehenſible Management of Law Suits. But ordinarily it is a very difficult Taſk, and there is great Danger of offending God attending the ſame. For I think there is hardly any thing, that ſhews more the *Conduct* and *Goodneſs* of a Man, than to be able to keep innocent whilſt he is put upon contending, and ſo to manage a *Suit*, or *other Conteſt*, as that his own Conſcience ſhall have no Cauſe to *accuſe* or *condemn* him for it when he has done. But then the Effect of this can be nothing elſe, but that Men be very *ſlow* in coming to a Suit *at Law*; and very *circumſpect* in all they do, when in a Thing of Weight, after other Means have been tried in vain, they cannot avoid it. It muſt make them *ſlow* in coming to it, I ſay. And this, beſides its quitting them of the *Hazard*, will, I believe, make alſo for their *Eaſe*; for they will generally find leſs Difficulty in *bearing their Loſs*, than in *keeping themſelves innocent*, whilſt they ſeek *judicially to repair it*. But when the Thing is of ſo great Weight, that a Suit cannot well be avoided; it muſt make them very circumſpect and watchful over themſelves all the Time it is going on, leſt they incur any of theſe Sins in Purſuit thereof. The Greatneſs of their Care muſt anſwer to the Greatneſs of the Danger, ſo that they muſt reſolve to ſet a ſtrict Guard upon

upon themſelves in ſuing, or elſe not venture to begin any Suit at all.

And thus it appears, that although in *itſelf*, a Suit at Law be an innocent Thing; yet, when it is either begun upon an *unjuſtifiable Ground*, or carried on by a *ſinful Management*, it is not innocent, but defiles the Conſcience of a Chriſtian. It is our *Sin*, and we muſt account for it, when we ſeek *Revenge* thereby, or *Reparation* of a Thing ſo *ſmall* as cannot bear to have a Suit commenced for it; or if it be a *weighty* Matter, when we ſeek to have our Loſs repaired, by *Delays of Juſtice*, *Falſifications*, *vexatious Arts*, or any other Inſtances of *Injuſtice*, or *Uncharitableneſs*, which is a *ſinful Way of managing our Suit:* When this is the State of our Caſe, there is a great Offence in it: And whilſt that laſts, it deprives us of the *Favour of God*, and ought to exclude us from the Holy Sacrament. Whereas, were it free of *theſe*, there would be no Hurt in ſuing, nor any Cauſe at all why a good Soul ſhould be hindred from the Holy Table thereby.

As for this Hindrance then, whereby devout Minds are oft times withheld from coming to this Holy Feaſt, *viz.* their *being ingaged in a Suit at Law*; we ſee now at length what Weight is to be laid upon it, and when indeed they ought to be hindred by it. For if there are no *Damages* to be expected in the Cauſe, but we ſue only for *Revenge*; or if, when there are, they are ſo *ſmall* as will not bear a Suit, but ought to be a Matter of *Forgiveneſs*; or if, when the Loſs is of that Moment which would juſtify a Suit, we tranſgreſs any Inſtances of *Juſtice* or *Charity* in managing the Proceſs; our Suit is our Sin, which will not be forgiven us till we ſhew *Repentance of the ſame.* When it is unlawful upon the *Unjuſtifiableneſs of the Ground*,

Ground, we ſin in it till we *put an End* to it; and when it is ſo upon ſome particular *Injuſtice*, or *Uncharitableneſs* in the *Way of Management*, we ſin in it till *that Particular is corrected* and *amended*. And ſo long as we are impenitent in *either* of *theſe*, we are *unfit* for the Holy Sacrament, ſince no Man, who allows himſelf in any Sin, is worthy to partake of it. But then we are equally unfit to *pray*, or perform any other *religious Service*, or *hope for the Forgiveneſs* of *our Sins* and *eternal Happineſs*; becauſe, as I have formerly obſerv'd, *Juſtice*, *Peace*, and *Charity*, and other Virtues, are equally neceſſary in all theſe Caſes. If our Suit then is either upon an *unwarrantable Ground*, or ſinful in the *Way of Management*; ſo long as this Sin *laſts* and is unamended, we are *unworthy to communicate*. But then that is not all, for ſo we are alſo to *die*, to *pray*, or to have any *ſpiritual Peace*, or *Comfort*. And this is a State which no wiſe Man will perſiſt in for one Moment, but, whenſoever he lays it to Heart, he will forthwith repent and get out of it; and when once that is done, this Hindrance is removed, and he may be welcome to feaſt with Chriſt at the Holy Table. But if the Suit is innocent in *both* theſe Reſpects, and none of theſe Sins do adhere to it; if there is a *weighty Loſs* to be repaired, or a *weighty Right* to be got thereby; and we are in all Points *juſt*, *charitable*, and *peaceable* in looking after that Right; or if, when we happen to fail in any Inſtance we do in that, as we do in all other Slips of our *daily Converſe*, *viz.* Watch better the next Time, and *immediately repent* of our Failure; then has a Suit *no Offence to God*, nor any Hurt at all in it; and ſo unfits us not for *any good* Thing, and then ſurely not for the *Bleſſed Sacrament*. When this is our Caſe, our having a Trial at Law depending,

depending, need no more hinder us from Communicating, than from any other Buſineſs. So that if there is nothing elſe to diſcourage us, we may ſafely come to the Lord's Table, and expect to be kindly entertained by him when we do.

CHAP. V.

Of three other Hindrances.

The CONTENTS.

A Seventh *Hindrance is, becauſe others are not in Charity with them, ſo that they are afraid leſt they want that Peace which is required of all worthy Receivers. As for other Mens Uncharitableneſs, it is their Sin, and ſo unfits them; but not being ours, it unfits not us for Receiving. If that ought to exclude any from the Holy Sacrament, it had excluded our Saviour Chriſt and his Apoſtles, and the primitive Chriſtians, ſince none had ever ſuch implacable Enemies as they had. Care to be taken that their Enmity to us be not continued thro' our own Fault; ſo that if we have given them juſt Occaſion, we muſt endeavour a Reconciliation; and if we gave them none, we muſt be careful not to hate them again. An* Eighth *Hindrance is, becauſe it is a Preſumption in us to come to this Holy Feaſt, and therefore an humble Man ought in all Modeſty to abſtain from it. But,* 1. *It is no Preſumption to come when we are called, and to do what we are bidden.* 2. *It is a very great Preſumption to ſtay away, and leave it undone.* 3. *If the Height of Privilege and Honour vouchſafed to us therein, be ſufficient to make an humble Man*

Man refuse the Communion; it will also carry him to renounce the whole Christian Profession. *A* Ninth *Hindrance is, because many good People are seldom or never seen there, so that they have good Company, and may be good too, if they abstain from it. But,* 1. *In enquiring after our own Duty, we are not to ask whether others practise it, but whether Christ has any where enjoined that it should be practised.* 2. *If any good People keep from the Sacrament, that is no Part of their Goodness, so that therein they are not to be imitated.* 3. *Tho' they might be acceptably good whilst they were afraid to come to it, thro' innocent Scruples and honest Ignorance; yet will it be a very great Fault even in them, to neglect it after they are better informed, which will not be forgiven, but upon their Amendment thereof.*

A *Seventh* Hindrance which keeps back several Persons from the Holy Sacrament is, because *altho' they be with others,* yet *others are not in Charity with them*; and therefore *they are afraid lest they want that Peace which is required of all worthy Receivers.*

Now if this ought to hinder them from the Holy *Communion,* it ought equally to be their Hindrance from *Prayers,* and all *Devotion*; since there is the same Necessity in them all, as I have noted, of *Peace* and *Reconciliation* with our Brethren, *Mat.* v. 23, 24.

But if this be really their Case, it need not hinder them. For if *other* Men will hate us, do what we can, that is our *Unhappiness,* indeed, whilst we suffer under it: But it is not our *Fault,* nor renders us ever the worse in the Eyes of Almighty God, since we have done nothing to *deserve* their Hatred, nor is it in our Power to *help* it.

it. God commands us to *love our Enemies*; ſo that if we *hate* them we ſin, and are juſtly kept back by our *own Uncharitableneſs*. But he no where commands us to *make our Enemies love us*: So that if after all they will ſtill bear Enmity towards us, that is only *their own* Sin, and therefore whatever it do with *them*, it ought not in any Reaſon to be *our* Hindrance.

And indeed if it ought, it would much more have hindred our Saviour *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles* from communicating, than now it can any *other* Perſons; becauſe none of thoſe who ſtick at this Impediment, have any Enemies ſo bitter and implacable as *they* found *theirs*. For the *Jews* hated *him* ſo far, as to ſeek his *Life*, and at laſt, in moſt barbarous Sort, obtained their Purpoſe. And he tells his *Diſciples*, that the Time was coming, when *every one that killed them*, *would think* that therein he approved himſelf a Friend of Religion, and *did God good Service*, John xvi. 2. And this they all found by ſad Experience, being accounted, as St. *Paul* ſays, *the very Filth of the World*, *and the Off-ſcouring of all Things*, i. e. Nuiſances as neceſſary to be ſwept away, as Dirt out of the Streets, 1 *Cor.* iv. 13. and accordingly being perſecuted in every Place, till they had laid down their Lives for Chriſt's Sake, and the Goſpels. Thus were they reputed as *publick Enemies* of all Countries, and hated of all Men as the vileſt Miſcreants, who breath'd Infection whereſoever they came, and were the common Peſt of all Places. And therefore if this be a ſufficient Hindrance from the Holy Communion, that *others hate us*, it ſhould always have hindred, and utterly excommunicated our Saviour *Chriſt*, and his Holy *Apoſtles*, and all the *Chriſtians* of the *firſt Times*, who, being always implacably hated, and moſt ſpitefully

ſpitefully perſecuted, upon this Account, ought always to have abſtain'd, and not to have receiv'd at all.

As for *others* being *out of Charity with us* therefore, that ought not to be *our* Hindrance. But then we muſt take Care that *we be in Charity with them*, and that their Hatred to us be not either begot or continued through any *Offence* or *Fault* of ours; elſe we ſhall be kept back thro' our own *Uncharitableneſs*. So that if we gave *juſt* Cauſe for their wrathful Indignation, we muſt endeavour a *Reconciliation*, by *confeſſing our Fault*, and *repairing the Wrong* which we did to them, or if we gave *none*, we muſt ſtill be careful to *love them*, though they will not be perſuaded to *love us*, and not harbour any *Enmity* or *Hatred* towards them again.

If we have given juſt Cauſe, I ſay, *for their wrathful Indignation*, through any *Injuries* or *Offences* of ours, we muſt endeavour a Reconciliation, by *confeſſing our Fault*, and *repairing the Wrong* which we did to them. When we have done any thing whereat they are diſpleaſed, if they have no Reaſon for it, we ſhould ſeek to rectify their Miſtakes about it, and inform them better: But if they *have*, we muſt give them all proper Satisfaction, and make a juſt Amends for it. If the Offence be by Reaſon of our *Affronts* or *contumelious Carriage*; we muſt *acknowledge our Fault to them*, and *promiſe* to do ſo no more, and *aſk their Forgiveneſs*: And if we have *injuriouſly prejudiced* them in their *Eſtates*, *Good Names*, or *Buſineſs*; we muſt, as far as in us lies, *repair the Loſs* which they have ſuſtain'd by us. And this God expects from us, before he will accept of our *Offerings*, or be pleas'd with us in any Ordinance. *When thou bringeſt thy Gift to the Altar*, ſays our

Saviour, *and there remembreſt that thy Brother hath aught againſt thee, go thy way, firſt be reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy Gift*, Mat. v. 23, 24.

But if *they hate us*, when *we gave them no Cauſe*, nor have in any wiſe *deſerved* it of them; yet muſt we ſtill *be careful to love them, though they will not be perſuaded to love us*, and not *harbour any Enmity, or Hatred towards them again.*

We muſt love them, I ſay; not with that *Degree* of Love, indeed, wherewith we embrace our *particular Friends*, and thoſe who have *better deſerved of us*; but with that, which we owe in *common to all Perſons*. We muſt have ſo much Affection for them, as will reſtrain us both from doing, and *ſpeaking Evil* of them, and make us exerciſe that *Juſtice*, and ſhew that *common Kindneſs* towards them in all Converſation, which is due from us to the promiſcuous Multitude of other Men. For all theſe Inſtances of *general Charity*, are due to our very *Enemies*, as I have already ſhewn. So that when they are unmoveable in their Hatred, and perſiſt in their malicious Ways; yet muſt not that *provoke* us into any ſpiteful Returns, or chafe us into any hard Speeches, or injurious or unkind Carriage towards them again.

An *Eighth* Hindrance, which holds back ſeveral Perſons from coming to this Holy Feaſt, notwithſtanding it is ſo much both their *Duty* and their *Privilege*, as I have ſhewn, to join therein; is, becauſe it *looks like an high Preſumption in us to feaſt on the Body* and *Blood of our Sovereign Lord*, and to eat *at the ſame Table with Almighty God*; and therefore, ſay they, an *humble Man ought in all Modeſty to abſtain from it*. I have already conſidered, that *Unworthineſs*, which reſpects the *Manner of Receiving*, and anſwered thoſe, who urge that they are *unworthy*

unworthy to communicate, meaning thereby, that they want that *Height of virtuous* and *devout Tempers*, which they apprehend to be required thereto. But this Unworthineſs, is not from the Want of ſuch *due Diſpoſitions*, or from the *Indecency in the unſuitable Receiving*; but from the *inacceſſible Height* and *Greatneſs of the Thing*, which they think is ſo far above us, that *fit* or *unfit*, *no* Perſon is worthy of it, but that it is Boldneſs in any one to touch Things ſo ſurpaſſing high and excellent. But to ſatisfy theſe Perſons, who think it a Piece of *Arrogance* and *Preſumption* to come to this Holy Sacrament, when the Lord not only *requeſts*, but *commands* them to come, I ſhall ſuggeſt to them theſe *three* Things.

1. *It is no Preſumption to come to this Feaſt when we are called, and to do what we are bidden.* If we ſhould intrude of our *own* Accord, and come uninvited, we might be too *bold*, indeed, and very *rudely arrogant*. But when we are particularly ſent to, and called to come, eſpecially if there be, as in this Caſe there is, great Earneſtneſs and Importunity in the Invitation; it is the Part of an humble Man to comply therewith, and he is not guilty of the leaſt Shew of *Arrogance* and *Ill-breeding* in ſo doing. There is *Civility* ſhewn ſometimes in *accepting* as well as in *offering* Kindneſſes, and it is *Good-manners* to *receive what God would have us*, yea, indeed, to accept any thing from the Hand of our *Betters*. So that in all *Civility* and *inoffenſive Carriage* we were bound to come, had we nothing more than a *Friendly Invitation*. But beſides that, God has expreſly enjoin'd, as I have obſerv'd, and peremptorily required it of us: So that now we muſt approach to this Holy Table, not only out of *Civility* and *Reſpect*, but alſo out of *Obedience* to his Holy Commandment. And

true Humility is no Hindrance, but the greateſt Furtherance in the World to ſuch a Service; it being not the Part of a *preſumptuous*, but of a *truly humble* Man to do what he is bidden, and to pleaſe thoſe whom he is bound in Duty to obey.

It is no Preſumption then to come to the Holy Sacrament when we are called, and to do what we are bidden. But,

2. It *is a very great Boldneſs and Preſumption to ſtay away, and leave what he bids us do undone.* He is no *proud* Man who *accepts* a Kindneſs when it is *offered*, and he is *earneſtly invited* to it: But he may ſhew *Pride* and *Haughtineſs* enough, who *ſlights* and *deſpiſes* it. And he is no *bold* Man, that doth what he is *commanded*; but he ſhews *Boldneſs*, and *preſumes*, indeed, that dare venture to *tranſgreſs* it. There are no Men ſo bold and preſumptuous with God, as they who will act what he forbids, and refuſe to do what he enjoins them. So that it is truly an high Preſumption to ſtay away, when he has expreſly charged us, both upon our *Duty* and our *Love* for him, to join in the Holy Communion.

3. If *the Height of Privilege and Honour, which is vouchſafed to us therein, be ſufficient to make an humble modeſt Man refuſe the Communion*; ſince his *whole Religion* is made up of *high Characters* and *honourable Privileges, it will not reſt in that alone, but will carry him on equally to renounce the whole Chriſtian Profeſſion.* What thinks he of *Holy Baptiſm*, wherein he was made not only a *Servant*, but a *Child of God*; not only a *Friend*, but a *Brother and joint Heir with Chriſt*; and an *Inheritor*, not of a *ſmall Eſtate*, but of a *Kindgdom*, and that no *cheap* or *fading* one neither, but of the *Kingdom of Heaven?* What thinks he of the *Happineſs of another Life*, wherein God will fill us with unutterable

unutterable *Joys*, and adorn us with Crowns and Scepters, and take us, as our Saviour says, into the *same Throne with himself*, Rev. iii. 21. What thinks he of his *Redemption* and the Rate it cost, not being obtainable unless *God's only Son* would *come down from Heaven* and be *made Man*, and pay down his *own Life* for it? Are not *all these* as superlatively high Things, and as much above us, as *feasting with God in the Communion* is? Is it not as great a *Presumption* in us to become *God's Sons*, and to *inherit Kingdoms*, and to hope for *Crowns*, and *Thrones*, and *Scepters*; as it is to *sit down with him as his Guests*, and to *eat* and *drink in his own Presence?* Is it not as high an *Arrogance* to *admit* that *Christ should die for us*, as it is to come and remember *his Death*, and to *accept of those Benefits* which are conveyed to us thereby? All these Things are infinitely above us, and we could not have had the Face to have asked any of them, if God had referred it to our own Choice, and bid us name what we would for our own selves. But yet, since in his unbounded Love and Kindness he has *freely offered* them, we must have the good Manners in all *forward Thankfulness* and *Humility* to *accept them*, and not out of a Shew of *Modesty*, and *unreasonable Self-abasement*, *refuse* the same. When God calls us then to feast with him in the Holy Sacrament, and to feed upon the Body and Blood of our dearest Lord; we must not hold back because there is so eminent a Privilege, and so high an Honour in it. For we desire no greater Favour, or higher Honour therein, than in being made *God's Children*, as we were in *Holy Baptism*; than in *Christ's Incarnation*, *Death*, and *Suffering*; than in the Offers of *Crowns*, and *Thrones*, and the other *glorious Privileges* of *our Religion*. So that if the *Fear of receiving too much*

Honour from God, ought to put us by the *Communion*; it ought as much to the full to put us by our *Baptiſm*, and the whole *Chriſtian Profeſſion*.

As for thoſe then, who are hindred from the Holy Sacrament, by the Fear of being too *bold* and *preſumptuous* with Almighty God, in coming to a *Feaſt* which has ſuch *Height of Privilege* and *Honour* in it: They are hindred without any juſt Ground, and kept back by that which ought not to hinder them. For it is no *Preſumption*, but the Part of *humble* Men, to *come when they are called*, and to *do what they are bidden*; but it is a very *great Boldneſs and Preſumption to ſtay away*, and *leave it undone*; and if the *Height of Privilege and Honour vouchſafed therein*, be *ſufficient to keep back humble Souls from this Feaſt*, it muſt alſo keep them back from *Baptiſm*, wherein the ſame Honours are conferred which are conferred in the *Euchariſt*, and carry them in the ſame *Guiſe of Modeſty* to refuſe *Chriſt's dying for them*, and all the *Hopes of Heaven*, and, in a Word, their *Chriſtianity* and *whole Religion* too.

A *Ninth* Plea, whereby ſeveral Perſons are wont to excuſe their not coming to the Holy Sacrament, is, becauſe *many good People are ſeldom or never ſeen thereat, and therefore they may be good too, and have good Company, if they keep away from it.*

Now, as for thoſe who urge this in Excuſe, I would deſire them to conſider, that when they are enquiring after their *own Duty* in any Matter, it is no right Way to aſk whether *others practiſe it*, but whether their *Lord* has any where *commanded* that it ſhould be practiſed. For Mens Practice is not always fully anſwerable to their own Duty, and ſo is a very falſe Rule whereby to judge of *ours*. All Perſons have their Faults,

and

and tho' no good Man can continue in any *wilful ones*, yet will even they be subject to several *ignorant Slips*, and *unadvised Miscarriages*. But when at any Time they either *wilfully* break any Commandment, or *ignorantly* mistake it; that is no Warrant for us to do so likewise. So that if we would truly understand whether we are bound to communicate, our Way is not to enquire whether others do it, but whether our Lord has any where enjoined it to be done; for if he has, we are certainly obliged to communicate, whether others do it or no.

But in more particular Answer to this Plea, I must tell them,

1. That, *If any good People keep away from the Blessed Sacrament, that is no Part of their Goodness, but their Blemish, so that therein they are not to be imitated.* For we have God's *express Command* to come, and that we cannot slight, without being disobedient, and guilty of a plain Transgression. We are called therein, to shew ourselves *thankfully mindful* of our blessed *Saviour's Death*, and of all that he has done or suffered for our Sakes; and this Call we cannot deny, without proclaiming ourselves most *shamefully unthankful* towards him. We are summon'd in to *profess Repentance* and *Amendment* of all *our Sins*; and this we cannot honestly decline, if *really* we are *resolved* to leave them. We are invited to *declare ourselves at Peace* with all the Members of our Lord, and reconciled to all the *Christian* World; and this Invitation no Man can fairly refuse, who in very Deed is in *Charity* with all Men, and is become an *hearty Friend* to them. God's *Laws* peremptorily *enjoin* us, and the Things therein implyed do straitly oblige us to partake of the Holy Sacrament, when we have an Offer of a fit Oppor-

tunity for the ſame; ſo that every Man, who makes *Conſcience of his Duty*, and regards Obedience to his Lord, muſt be careful to join therein. And it is the *greateſt Means of a good Life*, and Obligation to Amendment that can be preſcribed; ſo that every one who has a *juſt Care of his own Soul*, and is earneſtly deſirous of virtuous Improvements, will ſeek to be admitted to it. A good Man's *Duty* binds him, and the *Care of his own Soul* engages him to communicate; ſo that there is neither *Virtue* nor *Prudence* ſhewn in ſtaying away, nor is it any Part of Goodneſs to neglect it. And therefore if any Perſons otherwiſe good, are ſeldom ſeen at the Bleſſed Sacrament; that is no Part of their Goodneſs, but their Fault, ſo that therein they are not to be imitated.

2. *Though they might be acceptably good* whilſt *they were afraid to come to it, thro' innocent Scruples, and honeſt Ignorance; yet will it be a very great Fault, even in them, to neglect it after they are better informed, which will not be forgiven them, but upon their Amendment thereof.*

A good Man cannot indulge himſelf in *any known Sin*; for he ceaſes to be good and acceptable to God, if he perſiſts in any Sins after he is plainly told of them, and has had his Duty evidently ſet before him. *The Wrath of God is revealed from Heaven againſt all Unrighteouſneſs*, ſaith St. *Paul*, *Rom.* i. 18. And *he that breaks one* Law, ſaith St. *James*, *is guilty of all*, i. e. of that eternal Puniſhment which is denounced, not barely to ſome one, but to all, *Jam.* ii. 10. So that when once this great Duty of coming to the Holy Sacrament is clearly laid out, and his Conſcience is inlightened and poſſeſſed with a Senſe thereof; he can be no good Man who wilfully holds off ſtill, and refrains to come to it. Whilſt he

he was perplexed with Doubts about it, indeed, and either thro' the *looſe* Diſcourſes of ſome, thought himſelf *not obliged*; or, thro' the unreaſonable *Rigour* and *Severity* of others, after all his Repentance and full Purpoſes of Amendment, thought himſelf ſtill *unprepared* to receive the ſame: For the Pitiableneſs of his *Ignorance*, and *unwill'd Miſtake*, ſo long as they laſted, his Neglect thereof may be excuſed and connived at. But if after all his *Doubts* have been *reſolved*, and Things have been ſet in a *clearer Light*, he continue ſtill to ſlight the Lord's Table; then he is guilty of a very *great Offence*, which will not be *forgiven* till he *repents* of it and *amends* it. *To him that knows to do good, and doth it not*, ſaith St. *James*, *to him it is Sin*, Jam. iv. 17. And when any wilful Sin ſtands charged on our Account, it will not be ſtruck off, till we forſake and turn away from it. For to all ſuch Sinners, God's Declaration is this, *Except ye repent, ye ſhall all periſh*, Luke xiii. 3.

As for thoſe then, who urge this in Excuſe for their not coming to the Holy Sacrament, becauſe *ſeveral good People are ſeldom or never ſeen at it:* My Anſwer to them in *ſum* is this. In *judging our Duty*, we muſt not take our Meaſures from *other Mens Practice*, but from our *Bleſſed Lord's Commandments*; ſince, if they diſobey any Precept, that is no Excuſe to us, nor gives us any Warranty, for Company's Sake, to diſobey likewiſe. And as for the Sacrament, in particular, if any good People *keep away* from it, that is no Part of *their Goodneſs*; ſo that therein they are not to be imitated. Nay, if they *continue* in this *Neglect*, after their *Conſciences* are *rightly inſtructed*, and *informed* about it; they *ceaſe to be good*, and commit a *damning Offence*, an *impenitent Continuance* in any

any *one known Sin*, putting any Perſon out of a *State of Grace*. Whilſt they were held back purely by *Doubts* and *Scruples*, and *Want of Knowledge*, without their own Fault; their Omiſſion was fit to be *connived* at, and they might continue acceptably good notwithſtanding it. But if ſtill they perſiſt therein, after they know more, and are better inſtructed about the ſame; they are guilty of a very criminal Neglect, which will not be paſſed over, but upon the ſame Terms as all other known Sins are, *i. e.* their *Repentance of it*. If they ſtay away out of Ignorance and Miſtake, all they can expect, is, to be pitied, but not to be commended for their Omiſſion; and if, out of Wilfulneſs, after their Conſcience has been ſet right therein, they will be ſeverely puniſh'd, unleſs they are timely reclaimed from it. So that no Man muſt ever hope to juſtify himſelf in refraining the Lord's Table, becauſe he has good Company, and knows of ſeveral others, whom he takes to be very holy Perſons, that are wont to refrain it too.

CHAP. VI.

Of Three other Hindrances.

The Contents.

A Tenth *Hindrance is, becauſe others, who are unworthy of the Holy Sacrament, are admitted to join in it. But,* 1. *They ought not to be forward in judging others unworthy, leſt they be miſtaken in their Judgment of them.* 2. *When ſome, who as they have great Cauſe to think, are unworthy,*

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do receive, yet ought not that to hinder them from receiving too. For if it be a ſufficient Hindrance, it had equally hindred our Saviour Chriſt, and the primitive Chriſtians. It ought not only to hinder us from the Communion, but alſo from being Members of the Chriſtian Church and Profeſſion. But it is plainly of no Force for either of them, ſince one Man ſhall not bear another's Burden, but every Man ſhall bear his own. St. Paul's *forbidding to eat with Fornicators,* &c. 1 Cor. v. 11. *ſhewn not to ſpeak againſt mixt Communion. 3. If ſtill any are really offended at the Communion of the Wicked, upon Complaint made againſt them in the Congregation, they are to be ſuſpended from the Holy Table, and denied the Sacrament. An* Eleventh *Hindrance, is, the Geſture of Kneeling, which is required in receiving the Communion. When any are abſent upon this Account, there is no Excuſe from it. Three Things inſiſted on, to prevent their being hindred thereby.* 1. *Kneeling is no unſuitable Poſture in receiving the Holy Sacrament, ſo that if we were left at Liberty, we might have enough to juſtify ourſelves in making uſe of it.* 2. *It is appointed by our Governors, whom God commands us to obey in all lawful Things; ſo that every good Man ought to obſerve it. But if it neither had Authority to enjoin, nor Reaſon to recommend it, but another Poſture might be better uſed: Yet,* 3. *Since it may lawfully be uſed too, tho' not ſo well, as they think, for the Sacrament's Sake, which is not otherwiſe to be had, they ſhould at leaſt comply with it. No Hindrance to this Compliance, becauſe the Geſture of Kneeling is different from that which our Saviour uſed. For ſo is Sitting too, and therefore they and we are equally concerned to anſwer this Argument. The Poſture he uſed was no Part of the Inſtitution, ſo that*

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the Inſtitution is not broken when the Poſture is altered. Neither that Poſture, nor any other has any Command of God for it; ſo that none is neceſſary, but all are ſtill indifferent. When a Poſture, different from that at the firſt Inſtitution, was introduced in Sacraments, our Saviour himſelf, and they themſelves too have ſubmitted to it. Again, no Hindrance to our Receiving the Sacrament Kneeling, from the Fear of worſhipping the Bread, or its being a Popiſh Rite. A Concluſion of this Point.

A *Tenth* Cauſe, which many Perſons are wont to aſſign for their abſenting themſelves from this Holy Feaſt is, becauſe *others, who are unworthy of it, are admitted to join in it.* Tho' this be a very good Thing, yet they fear they ſhould give Offence in doing it with ill Partners; and how worthy ſoever they may be in themſelves, they are jealous leſt they ſhould be defiled by the Unworthineſs of others. So that unleſs they can receive the Sacrament in an unmixt Company, and only with the pure and true Believers, they think beſt to ſtay away, and not receive it at all.

But that they may not be kept back by this Hindrance, I ſhall obſerve to them theſe *three Things.*

1. That *they ought not to be forward in judging any others unworthy to communicate, leſt they be miſtaken in their Judgment of them.* For every *penitent* Man, who is fully *reſolved* to leave all his Sins, is really worthy to receive the Bleſſed Sacrament; and whether the Perſon whom they think unworthy be ſo reſolved or no, is very hard for them to judge, ſince no Man can ſee into another's Heart, and only God and his own Soul are privy to it. When he comes to the Lord's Table,

Table, every Communicant profeſſes to repent, and promiſes to lead a new Life thenceforward, and when he ſolemnly declares he is thus reſolved, it is hard for another Perſon, who cannot ſee into his Soul, to ſay he is not, but is ſtill impenitent. Tho' all good Men therefore may be free in judging of themſelves, yet ought they to be very wary how they paſs a Judgment on the Unworthineſs of others. They muſt not be forward to pronounce of it, becauſe it is hard for them to know it; ſo that when they give Sentence againſt their Brethren in this Point, it is venturouſly done, and they are liable to be deceived therein.

2. *When ſome others, who, as they have great Cauſe to think, are unworthy, do receive the Holy Sacrament; yet ought not that to hinder them from receiving it too.* Our Buſineſs ſhould not be to move Queſtions and Diſputes about the Preparedneſs of others, but to be careful duly to prepare ourſelves; and when once we are fitly qualified for it, we ought to come whether they be ſo or no. Their Unworthineſs will have all its Effect upon themſelves, but will not hinder our Acceptance, nor ought to put us by from doing both our Bleſſed Saviour, and our own Souls this Service.

To ſhew this, I ſhall obſerve theſe *three* Things.

1. *If the Company of ill and unworthy Perſons be a ſufficient Hindrance from the Holy Communion, it is not ſo barely unto us, but would equally have hindred our Saviour Chriſt, and the primitive Chriſtians.* For when our Lord eat his *own Supper*, it was not with a ſelect Company of *worthy Receivers*, but with a *mixt* Multitude of *Saints* and *Sinners*. Thus he found it in the *Jewiſh Paſſover*; for *all the Congregation of Iſrael*, both good and bad, were to *eat of it*, and none but *Foreigners* and *hired Servants* were excluded from it,

it, *Exod.* xii. 45, 47. And the like Mixture of *Gueſts* he allowed, when he inſtituted this Feaſt inſtead of their *Paſſover*. For in great likelihood *Judas*, who, as the Scripture ſays, *was a Thief*, John xii. 6. and *the Son of Perdition*, John xvii. 12. was one of the Twelve who communicated with him, *Mat.* xxvi. 20, 25, 26. *Luke* xxii. 20, 21. And in the *firſt* Times, all Chriſtians, as I have ſhewn, *Part* I. *Chap.* 4, who came together to *pray* to God, met alſo to *receive* the Holy Sacrament, that being then a conſtant Part of their publick Worſhip. The Number of *Communicants* in thoſe Days was the ſame with the Number of *Chriſtians* or *baptized* Perſons. For all Men then met in the Communion, who were made Members of Chriſt's myſtical Body, the Church, by *Baptiſm*, and had neither broke themſelves off from it again by *Schiſm*, nor were cut off by *Excommunication*, as St. *Paul* plainly intimates, when he ſays of thoſe *Many*, who make up *the one Body*, that they *are all Partakers of that one Bread*, 1. Cor x. 17; and of all thoſe who *have been baptized into one Body*, that they *have been all made to drink into one Spirit*, 1 Cor. xii. 13. So that *their Communions*, as well as *ours*, were mixt Aſſemblies, which were made up of worthy and unworthy Receivers. And therefore if other Mens Unworthineſs ought to be our Hindrance, it ſhould alſo have hindred our Bleſſed Saviour Chriſt, and his Holy Apoſtles, and the Primitive Chriſtians, who, if this be a good Reaſon for it, ſhould all have forborn the Sacrament, becauſe *Judas*, a loſt Man, and other unprepared and unworthy Perſons, met alſo with them at the ſame Time to partake thereof.

As to the Inſtance of *Judas*, which proves ſo convincingly the Lawfulneſs of Receiving with unworthy

unworthy Perſons, ſome, perhaps, may make a Doubt of it, and queſtion whether he ſtaid to receive with the reſt. St. *Matthew*, it is true, ſays, Chriſt *ſate down with the Twelve, and while they were eating, took Bread*, &c. Mat. xxvi. 20, 25, 26. Nay, St. *Luke* ſays farther, that after he had *inſtituted* and *delivered* his *own Supper*, Luke xxii. 19, 20, he particularly told them, that *the Hand of him who betrayed him*, was *with him on the Table*, ver. 21. But St. *John*, in the Account which he gives, ſays, that *Judas went immediately out after he had received the Sop*, John xiii. 30. And a Sop dipped in the thick Sauce being Part of the Paſchal Supper, from his *going out immediately after the Receipt of the Sop*, ſome would preſume that he ſtayed only to partake in the Paſſover, but aroſe and went out before Chriſt inſtituted his own Supper, which was not begun till the Paſſover was ended.

But in Anſwer to this, it may ſuffice to note, that the Ground of this Conjecture is a Miſtake. For this *Supper*, mentioned by St. *John*, whereat he ſays *Judas* went out immediately after the Receipt of the Sop, was not the Paſchal Supper. For beſides that it is expreſly ſaid of St. *John*'s Supper, that *the Devil made his Entry into* Judas *after it was ended*, ver. 2, 27; which could not therefore be the *Paſſover*, becauſe, as St. *Luke* teſtifies, he had entred into him before the *Paſſover* was fully come, when it only *drew nigh*, Luke xxii. 1, 3. Beſides this, I ſay, St. *John* ſays expreſly of the Supper he mentions, that it was before *the Feaſt of the Paſſover*, ver. 1. And when, during that Supper, our Lord bade *Judas diſpatch what he had to do quickly*, ver. 27. Some of the other Diſciples took the Meaning of that to be, as if he had bid him *buy what was needful*

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againſt the Feaſt, ver. 29, which they could never have underſtood to be meant ſo, if they had then been making an End of the Paſchal Feaſt, it being vain, indeed, at the End of a Feaſt, to think of making Proviſion for it. So that the Supper whereat *Judas* went out immediately after the Sop, and ſtayed not to ſee the reſt, was not the *ſolemn Feaſt of the Paſſover*, which Jeſus celebrated at *Jeruſalem*; but ſome other *ordinary Supper*, and very probably that which St. *Matthew* ſpeaks of, which he had *at* Bethany, *in the Houſe of* Simon *the Leper*, *two Days* before, *Mat.* xxvi. 2, 6, 7. But when the Paſſover came, he ſtayed to the End of it, and of the Lord's Supper which followed it; Jeſus plainly declaring, as I obſerved, that *the Hand of the Traytor was with him on the Table*, after both the *Bread* and *Wine* were *bleſſed* and *diſtributed*.

2. *If the Company of unworthy Perſons be a juſt Impediment from the Holy Communion, it ought to hinder us alſo from being Members of the Chriſtian Church and Profeſſion.* For the *Church* itſelf is a *mixt* Multitude of fit and unfit, of holy and unholy Perſons. It is compared to a *Net*, wherein *Fiſh of all Sorts are caught*, both *good* and *bad*, Mat. xiii. 47, 48; to a *Field*, where both *Wheat* and *Tares ſpring up together*, and wherein *both muſt grow together till the Harveſt*, ver. 24, 25, 30. All Chriſtians are not ſuch as their Saviour Chriſt was, and ſuch as their Religion requires they ſhould be: And therefore if we refuſe to ſhare in any *holy Thing* whilſt ſome unworthy Perſons pretend to it, and will not join in any *Act* or *State* wherein ill Men participate; we muſt not only ſhun the *Communion*, but ceaſe alſo to be Members of the *Church*, or to profeſs the *Chriſtian Religion*. Nay, I might add farther, ſince *all*

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Communities have *ſome* corrupt Members, and in every Body of Men there are ſome vicious as well as ſome godly Perſons; if we decline all Society and Fellowſhip which has ill Men to mix and partake in it, we muſt not ſtop in avoiding the Communion, and leaping out of the Chriſtian Church and Profeſſion, but, if we run on ſo far as this Principle will lead us, become Out-Laws to *Families*, *Townſhips*, *Kingdoms*, yea, to all Mankind.

3. *One ſhall not bear another's Burden, but every Man ſhall bear his own; ſo that if not we, but only they are unworthy, we are ſafe, and may freely come, and they alone are debarr'd from Receiving.* God will not puniſh one Soul for another's Fault, or be angry at *this*, becauſe *that* Perſon has deſerved it. But every Man ſhall ſtand or fall by his own Work, and either be approved or rejected according as it prepares him for the one or the other. *Let every Man prove his own Work*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *for every Man ſhall bear his own Burden*, Gal. vi. 4, 5. So that if we take Care to come worthily ourſelves, we ſhall be kindly treated and accepted by him, and not any ways prejudiced or frowned upon, for the Unworthineſs and undue Preparation of other Men.

But againſt all this it may be objected, that this *eating in mixt Communion* is againſt the Rule of St. *Paul*, who forbids the Chriſtians at *Corinth* to *keep Company with Drunkards*, *Fornicators*, *Railers*, &c. or to *eat Bread with them*, 1 Cor. v. 11.

But in Anſwer to this it may be obſerved, that the *eating* there ſpoken of, is not that of the *Communion* in the *publick Aſſemblies*, but only that of *civil Converſation at private Tables*. This was one Rule of Diſcipline in the firſt Times. For when

the Authority of the eſtabliſhed Guides, and the Aweſulneſs of Church-Cenſures, were inſufficient to reduce Offenders in a divided Church; the Apoſtles ordered all private Chriſtians to ſhun their Company and Acquaintance, till thereby they had ſhamed them out of their evil Courſes. Thus they dealt with miſguided *Hereticks*. *If there come any unto you*, ſaith St. *John*, *and bring not this Doctrine, receive him not into your Houſe, neither bid him God ſpeed*, 2 John 10. According to which Rule, when he went into the * *Bath* at *Epheſus*, and found the *Heretick Cerinthus* there, *he leaped out again unwaſhed, ſaying, Let us fly from this Enemy of the Truth, leſt by ſtaying with him, the Bath fall down upon us*, as *Irenæus* ſays, *ſeveral then alive could teſtify from the Mouth of* Polycarp, one of his Diſciples. And in like Manner, *Polycarp* himſelf, when the *Heretick Marcion* deſired him to *take Notice of him, and ſalute him*; replied, *He would take Notice of him no otherwiſe, than as of Satan's Firſt-born. So ſtudiouſly cautious*, ſays *Irenæus*, *were the Apoſtles, and their Diſciples, of entering into any Diſcourſe or Converſe with heretical Depravers of the Truth.* Thus alſo they dealt with *ſtubborn* and *contumacious Perſons*, who deſpiſed Church Orders, and the Eſtabliſhments of their ſpiritual Governors. *If any Man obey not our Word by this Epiſtle, note that Man*,

* Ac ſunt qui hoc ipſum *(viz. Polycarpum)* commemorantem audiverint, *Joannem* Domini Diſcipulum, cum Epheſi ad Balneum iiſſet, ac Cerinthum intus conſpexiſſet, illotum Balneo exiliiſſe, atque his verbis uſum fuiſſe, Fugiamus ne Balneum ruat, quod intus ſit *Cerinthus* veritatis Hoſtis. Quin ipſe quoque *Polycarpus*, cum *Marcion* aliquando in ipſius conſpectum veniſſet, ac dixiſſet, Agnoſce nos; reſpondit, Agnoſco Primogenitum Satanæ. Tanto ſtudio Apoſtoli, atque ipſorum Diſcipuli cavebant, ne cum quoquam eorum, qui veritatem adulterabant, vel ſermonis commercium inirent. *Iren.* adv. *Hæreſ.* l. 3. c. 3.

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and have no Company with him, says St. *Paul*, *that he may be ashamed*, 2 Thess. iii. 14. And thus they dealt, lastly, with *scandalous* and *noted evil Livers*. *We command you, Brethren, in the Name of Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every Brother that walketh disorderly, and not according to the Tradition he received of us*, 2 Thess. iii. 6. And so again to the *Corinthians* in this Place. *If any Man that is called a Brother, be a Fornicator, or Covetous, or an Idolater, or a Railer, or a Drunkard, or an Extortioner, I write unto you not to keep Company with such an one, no, not to eat with him*, i. e. exclude him from all Familiarity and civil Conversation, 1 *Cor.* v. 11. An Emphasis lies in these Words, *no, not to eat with him*; noting a Restraint from that, which seemed to most Men a very little Thing, as eating is in Conversation, tho' it be of the highest Account in the Communion. And moreover, the Eating here forbidden, is such *Eating and keeping Company* with *loose* and *disorderly Christians*, as was not forbid with other *disorderly Walkers*, who *were not Christians*; which cannot be said of Sacramental Eating, but only of eating at private Tables, *ver.* 10, 12.

Indeed, as for this Withdrawing of Acquaintance, Converse, and Trading from such Offenders (which was a Kind of *civil* Excommunication, that private Christians would use of themselves when the Scandals were notorious, as well as the ordinary Consequent in those Days of the publick Censures of the Church) it was no lasting Thing, but wore out by Degrees, and was much laid aside in Time. Whilst it was a prudent Rule of Discipline, and fit to shame and reclaim *heretical* or *vicious* Men, it was used towards them; and that by the private Zeal of good People, tho' no

publick Cenſure had paſſed againſt them. And this it was fit to do whilſt Chriſtians lived among Heathens; for then they would deſire to keep in with their own Party for Protection; and whilſt the Hereticks and ſcandalous Livers were few in Number; for then they could not have a conſiderable Party of their own to abet and ſupport them. And whilſt Religion was in this State, which rendererd it a prudent Courſe, as it was moſt eſpecially in the Apoſtles Days, this, as I have ſhewn, was a common *Rule and Practice* of the Church. But when once Chriſtianity became the common Religion, and both Hereſies and Vices would have great Names, and Numbers enough to abet and ſupport themſelves, if all the Orthodox and Godly ſhould decline them: Then this Renouncing of their Converſe would have ſerved to combine the Vicious and Erroneous into united Numbers, and put them out of the Way of good Counſels and Opportunities of Repentance, and every where extremely endanger'd and laid waſte the civil Peace. So that the State of Things being alter'd, which made it prudent and practicable, this Rule vaniſhed by Degrees, and was laid aſide. It lived longer in the Zeal of ſome *particular* Perſons, who withdrew themſelves from all Converſe of vicious Livers and heretical Opiniators; whereof *Monica*, the Mother of St. *Auſtin*, is an Inſtance in that Age, who, as he himſelf teſtifies, * *refuſed to diet with him, her own Son, when he was perverted to the Hereſy of the* Manichees. But as for the *Body* of Chriſtians, they left it off; this Way of private

* Nam unde illud ſomnium, quo eam conſolatus es, ut vivere me ſecum crederet, & habere mecum eandem menſam in Domo, quod nolle cœperat, averſans & deteſtans blaſphemias erroris mei. *Aug. Con.* l. 3. c. 11.

Chriſtians

Chriſtians renouncing all civil *Converſe with ſuch* as were not publickly excommunicated and cut off by the Church-cenſures, being laid aſide, as St. *Chryſoſtom* relates, before his Time. And ſo it continues ſtill, not only in our Church, but in all other Sects and Parties that are among us. For whatever ſome may do upon *diſcretionary* Grounds, to encourage and maintain their own Party; yet none of them think themſelves obliged in *Conſcience* to confine their Converſation or Dealing to their own Church, and neither to be acquainted nor trade with Men of other Opinions, but to do all among themſelves.

Beſides all this, for a fuller Clearing of this Place, I add farther, that when this Rule of *not keeping Company with open* tho' *unexcommunicated Offenders*, was moſt of all obſerved, as it was in the *Apoſtles* Days, yet even then did it admit of many Limitations, and it was ſtill allowed to company with them in ſeveral Caſes.

It forbade not private Chriſtians to join with them when they met together in *publick Offices of Religion.* For *Prayers* and *Sacraments* are a Duty we all owe to Almighty God, which we are indiſpenſably bound to perform, and muſt not deſert, becauſe ill Men intrude to do the ſame. And thus our Bleſſed *Saviour* kept Company, and eat with *Judas* himſelf; and ſo did the Church of *Corinth*, and other Churches, with other Offenders, in thoſe very Days, as I have ſhewn, when this Rule was given.

It forbade not joining with them in the *Duties of any Relation.* For notwithſtanding this Rule, *Children* were to *honour and obey their Parents*, and *Wives* their *Huſbands*, and *Servants* their *Maſters*, and *Subjects* their *Princes*, and all Men to *ſhew Gratitude* to their *Benefactors*, whatever ill

Life they lead, or heretical Opinion they had imbib'd. Tho' *a believing Woman have an unbelieving Husband*, says St. *Paul*, *let her not leave him*, 1 Cor. vii. 12, 13. And he bids *Children to obey their Parents in all Things*, Col. iii. 20. and *Subjects to obey Magistrates*, Tit. iii. 1. and *Servants to be subject to their own Masters*, 1 Pet. ii. 18. at a Time when they lived under Heathens.

It forbade not any Conversation which *sought to do them good, and endeavour'd their Amendment.* For, at the same Time when St. *Paul* enjoins this *Withdrawing* from them, he directs still to *admonish* them for their Reformation. *Note that Man, and have no Company with him; yet count him not as an Enemy*, to be looked no longer after, *but admonish him as a Brother*, 2 Thess. iii. 14, 15.

Nay, lastly, It forbade not good Christians to company with them, *when it was highly convenient* and *advantageous to themselves*, but allowed it, as Need required, in the Way of *Trade* and *Livelihood.* This St. *Paul* thought a sufficient Reason, why this Rule should not keep them from *dealing* and *conversing* with *Gentile Sinners.* When *I wrote to you*, says he, *not to company with Fornicators*, I meant not to forbid your companying *altogether with the Fornicators of this World, for then must you needs go out of the World*, and could not drive any Trade or Business, your Heathen Neighbours, among whom your Concerns lie, generally being such, 1 *Cor.* v. 9, 10. And where the same Detriment would have ensued, by forbearing to deal with *offending Christians*; in Reason and Equity, there would have been the same Allowance. The Rule was not given to punish the Innocent, but to reclaim the Guilty; so that in any Case, where the Good were like to be oppressed by it, it would have been equitably relaxed, and not have obliged at all.

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As for this Place of St. *Paul* then, it makes nothing againſt *mixt Communion*, nor forbids us to receive the Sacrament in Company with an ill Man. For it ſpeaks not of companying and eating, in the Sacrament, but in civil Converſation. There, indeed, while the Church was young, it did oblige for a Time: Tho' that Time is long ſince gone, this Courſe of ſhunning all Converſe with unexcommunicated Offenders, being vaniſhed long ago, as the State of Religion alter'd, which made it prudent, and being now univerſally neglected over all the World. And even during that Time, wherein it did oblige, it was with many Exceptions. For it allowed us of joining with them publickly in divine Offices, and alſo in the Duty of any particular Relations; ſo did it likewiſe of all ſuch Converſation, as either ſent to reclaim them, or was either neceſſary or highly advantageous to the ſound Chriſtians themſelves. But as for Religion, it neither requires nor authorizes any Perſons to withdraw from any Offices of it, when ill Men join in them. It is *Church-Governors* that muſt keep them away from theſe by *publick Cenſures*; and no Part of the Care of *private Chriſtians*, to prevent meeting them there, by *abſenting of themſelves*. So that at Prayers and Sacraments the Good muſt be ſure to ſhew themſelves, whatever Offenders happen to be there too.

But if the Preſence of ſuch Perſons would defile our *ordinary Converſe*, would it not much more defile *divine Offices*, may ſome ſay, and ſtain our Communion in *Prayers* and *Sacraments*, which being more ſublime and ſacred Things, muſt needs be more prophaned by the Company of ſuch Perſons? To which I anſwer, that if their very Preſence did defile our Converſe, or our private Tables, ſo indeed it would: But the Reaſon

why private Christians are to withdraw themselves from such Offenders, is not lest they should be defiled by being in the same Place with them, for that they are not, except they either join in their Sins, or learn some Ill from them; but that they may reclaim the Offenders by their withdrawing. This withholding Converse is a Rule of Discipline, which was prescribed for the Sake of those Sinners whom they withdraw from, and was intended, as St. *Paul* says, *to shame them*, 2 Thess. iii. 14. And this might be enjoined in Civil Conversation, because that is a free Thing; but not in Prayers and Sacraments, because they are necessary Duties, and no Man, when he is called to them, is at Liberty to absent from them.

Thus ought not the Sight of some unworthy Persons joining in it, to strike any Terror into us, or drive us from the Holy Sacrament. There is a great *Sin* and a great *Danger* in unworthy Receiving, which is enough to discourage all impenitent unworthy Men from *offering* at it: And where the *Censures* of the *Church* are held in any Esteem, and are likely to gain their End, thro' the Awe and Reverence which Men have for them, the Governors of the Church, both out of Compassion for their Souls, and Concern for the Honour of this Ordinance, may see Cause to *remove* them from it. But if neither the *Danger of the Thing*, nor any *affectionate* and *fair Warning*, nor any *enfeebled Hand of Discipline*, when it is become impotent, and of small Account, thro' the *Number of Offenders*, who are too strong for it, or thro' the *Multitude of Schisms* and *Divisions*, one Party entertaining those whom another shuts out, which mightily impairs the Force of it: If none of these, I say, can keep them out, but unworthy Men will press in, and presume to communicate;

municate; yet is their Unworthineſs only to *themſelves*; but as for others, who are truly worthy, they have no Hurt at all thereby. They ſhall not ſuffer for their Brethrens Sins, nor are incapacitated by their Unfitneſſes; ſo that whilſt they have no Unworthineſs in their own Souls, they may ſafely approach to the Holy Table, and chearfully receive ſtill.

But yet farther.

3. *If any ſhould be really ſcandalized at the Preſence of thoſe who are notoriouſly wicked, or who have done any Wrong to their Neighbours, either in Word or Deed; upon Complaint made againſt them in the Congregation, they are to be ſuſpended from the Holy Table, and denied the Sacrament.* For this Care our Church has taken in this Caſe, to prevent all thoſe whoſe Wickedneſs gives publick Scandal and Offence, from ſharing in thoſe Holy Myſteries. *If any* Communicant, ſays the *Rubrick* before the *Communion Service, be an open and notorious evil Liver, or have done any Wrong to his Neighbour, by Word or Deed, ſo that the Congregation be thereby offended; the Curate, having Knowledge thereof, ſhall call him, and advertiſe him, that in any wiſe he preſume not to come to the Lord's Table, until he hath openly declared himſelf to have truly repented and amended his former naughty Life, that the Congregation may thereby be ſatisfied, which before were offended; and that he hath recompenced the Parties to whom he hath done wrong, or at leaſt declare himſelf to be in full Purpoſe ſo to do as ſoon as conveniently he may.*

As for thoſe then, who are kept back from this Holy Feaſt, becauſe they ſee *ſome unworthy Perſons are admitted to it*, my Anſwer to them in brief is this: That they ought not to be forward in *judging any others unworthy*, becauſe it is hard for

for them to *know* it, and they are liable to be *mistaken* in their Judgment of them. And that when they have *great* and *plain* Cauſe to conclude *others unworthy*, yet ought not that in any wiſe to hinder them, who are *truly worthy*, from coming to receive too. For if the Company of unworthy Receivers were a juſt Hindrance from the Holy Sacrament, it would have hindred our *bleſſed Lord*, and the *primitive Chriſtians*, ſince it lay in *their* Way, as well as now it doth in *ours*; it would not reſt in withholding us from the Holy Communion, but would ſerve equally to put us by from being *Members* of the *Church*, or profeſſing the *Chriſtian Religion*. But it is plainly of no Force for either of them, ſince *one* Man ſhall not bear *anothers*, but *every one his own* Burthen. But if ſtill any are really ſcandalized by the Company of ſuch as are notoriouſly wicked, that Offence may be removed when they have a mind to remove it; for upon *Complaint* made, thoſe unworthy *Perſons* are to be *ſuſpended* from the *Holy Table*, and denied the Sacrament.

An *Eleventh* Hindrance, whereby ſeveral Perſons are kept back from joining in this Feaſt, is the *Geſture which is required thereat*. For tho' right-gladly they *would be admitted to the Holy Sacrament*, yet they ſay they *dare not kneel, as the Church appoints all Men to do when they receive it*.

Now when any Perſons refuſe the Holy Sacrament upon this Account; they have no ſufficient Plea or juſt Excuſe from it. When our bleſſed Lord ſhall aſk them, at the laſt Day, *Why they did not communicate according to his Appointment?* It will be but a bad Anſwer in them to ſay, it was becauſe *they could not ſit*, or uſe ſome other *Poſture there which they thought convenient*. For ſince he has only required the *Thing*, but has no where

where enjoin'd the Geſture which we are to receive in; he will have juſt Reaſon to reply to ſuch Men, that then it ſeems they would not do what *he bid* them, unleſs at the ſame Time they could do that alſo which he had *not bidden*; nor perform his Will, unleſs withal they ſhould be allowed to have their own; which juſtly merits a ſevere Reproof, but is far from being a Matter of Commendation.

But that they may not inexcuſably neglect ſo great a Commandment, upon ſo weak a Reaſon for it, I would offer to their Conſideration theſe *three* Things:

1. *Kneeling is no unſuitable Poſture in receiving the Holy Sacrament, ſo that if we were left at Liberty, we might have enough to juſtify ourſelves in making uſe of it.* For the Sacrament, as I have already ſhewn, is a *religious Feaſt*, wherein we are ſet in the Preſence of, and are *concerned with Almighty God:* And when we have to do with him, it is no ways unfit ſure to uſe ſuch a Poſture, as is *humble* and *reverent.* It is a Feaſt wherein we *receive the greateſt Benefits*, no leſs than our *Saviour Chriſt*'s moſt bleſſed *Body* and *Blood*, i. e. thoſe Benefits which his bloody Death procured: And when we *receive Gifts*, eſpecially of that *infinite Price*, and from our *Betters* and *ſupreme Governors*, it cannot miſbecome us to uſe ſuch Carriage as expreſſes moſt *Reſpect* and *Thankfulneſs.* It is a Feaſt whereat we *confirm the new Covenant*, and ſolemnly *give Thanks* and *Praiſe* to Chriſt, and pour out many *Prayers* and *Promiſes* to our heavenly Lord; and when we are *exerciſing Repentance*, and *uttering Praiſe*, and *making ſolemn Prayers* and *Oblations*, it is not certainly improper to uſe ſuch Geſtures, as beſt become *Devotions.* In the Sacrament we have to *do with Almighty God*, and

receive

receive moſt noble Gifts, and *act moſt humble Repentance* in *ſhamefully confeſſing* and *renouncing of our Sins*, and *give moſt hearty Thanks*, and *put up moſt ardent Prarers:* And therefore that Poſture muſt needs ſuit well with *it*, which becomes *theſe* Services. And that Kneeling will be allowed to do by all Perſons, ſince it has been ordinarily well liked in all Times, nay, preferred before others for the *Poſture of Devotions*. As it is a *Supper* and a *Feaſt*, ſome are apt to think *Sitting*, which with us at leaſt is the ordinary *Table-Poſture*, to be more convenient. But as this is not a *common*, but a *religious* Feaſt, wherein we have to do with God, and perform ſo many Things whereto all *inward Reverence* and *Humility* is required, there are Reaſons enough which moſt juſtly authorize *Kneeling* too; ſo that if we direct our Eyes to them, we ſhall ſoon ſee that it may very reaſonably be uſed, and is in no wiſe unſuitable or improper for it. And therefore if we were left at *Liberty* to receive it as we *pleas'd*, we might have enough to *juſtify ourſelves in making uſe* of it.

2. *Kneeling is appointed by our Governors, whom God commands us to obey in all lawful Things; ſo that every good Man, who is under Authority, ought to obſerve it.* God requires us *to be ſubject to Principalities and Powers, and to obey Magiſtrates*, Tit. iii. 1. and *to obey them that have the Rule over us, and to ſubmit ourſelves; for they watch for our Souls, as that they muſt give an Account* of them, *Heb.* xiii. 17. Now to *obey*, is to *do what we are bidden*; ſo that when they command this Poſture, we are bound in all Duty and Submiſſion to comply with them: Before they enjoin'd it, we were at Liberty to uſe either *it*, or *another*, according to our own Diſcretion. But when once they have interpoſed their Authority,

rity, St. *Paul* tells us, that Obedience in all *lawful Things*, such as *Kneeling* is, is our Duty. So that although we think another might be *better* used, and, were we left to ourselves, would make use of it: Yet when once they have enjoined this, we must deny ourselves, and submit to it.

But if Kneeling had neither any *Authority* effectually to enjoin it, nor any *Reason* from itself sufficient to recommend it; but that *Sitting*, or some *other* Posture, were much fitter to be used: yet,

3. *Since even in their own Opinion it may at least lawfully be used too, tho' not so well as they think; if Men have any due Value for, or Desire of the Holy Sacrament, for its Sake, and rather than miss of it, they should comply with this Posture.*

When we are hindred from the Holy Sacrament by *little* Things, and refuse to communicate unless we can have it ordered according to our own Liking in all Points, it is a Sign we do not think we greatly *need* it, nor are very *desirous* of it; for if we were, it is certain small Matters would not put us by it. Were we fully sensible how much it is both our *Duty* and our *Privilege* to partake therein, and thereupon did earnestly covet and long after it, we should be glad to be admitted to it in any Posture, and, so we might join in the Thing, submit readily to any Gesture to receive it in. If any Man refuse a *Present of a thousamd Pounds*, because it is brought to him in an homely Purse that is coarse and much decayed; or if he will throw back the *Conveyance of a fair Estate*, because it is sealed with a common Stamp which wants a Coat of Arms to it; all the World would say he would not be so *curious* if he stood in any great *Need* of them. And if any Person should turn away from the most *savoury* and

and *choiceſt Meat*, becauſe it is diſhed up on *Pewter*, not on *Plate*; the By-ſtanders would all conclude that he is full enough already, and has no great *Edge of Appetite*. And the Caſe is juſt the ſame when any of us ſhew Niceneſs about the *Poſture* of the Holy Sacrament. For did we really think we were in very great *Need* of it, and had ſuch an *ardent Deſire* as that we might be ſaid to *hunger* and *thirſt* after it; we ſhould be glad to have it in any Poſture, as we could be allowed to have it. So that altho' *Kneeling* were a Geſture whereto we were no ways obliged; nay, tho' itwere juſtly to be diſliked, not as *unlawful* indeed, but as *inconvenient*; yet, when the Sacrament is not otherwiſe to be had, there is no Man, who is duly deſirous to receive the ſame, but will comply therewith. He had *rather*, it may be, communicate *Sitting or Standing*, or after ſome other Manner which he fancies better, were it left to his own Liking, but yet, if he deſires it in ſuch Meaſure as he ought, he will *ſubmit* to receive Kneeling, rather than miſs the Opportunity, and not receive at all.

And this is the great Thing which I would urge upon all thoſe who are kept back by this Hindrance; namely, that altho' for its *own Sake* they would not *chuſe it*, yet for the *Sacrament's Sake*, which is not otherwiſe to be had, they would at leaſt *comply* with the *kneeling Poſture*. In my Judgment it is their *Duty* to kneel, ſince their Governors require it; and the *Poſture* is ſo *ſuitable* to the Feaſt, that were it not required, they might have enough to juſtify themſelves in makeing uſe of it; and if, upon the Reaſons I have here given, they are convinced of theſe Things, that clears the Caſe without more ado, and is the beſt

beſt Solution of it. But if their Prejudices ſtick ſtill after all, and in thoſe Points they happen not to be of my Mind, but think themſelves *free* from any Obligation to lawful Authority which appoints Kneeling, and conceive that *Sitting* is much *better* uſed; yet at leaſt, ſince Kneeling may lawfully be uſed too, for the Bleſſed *Sacrament's Sake*, which, if they value it as they ought, they would gladly accept of, tho' in a Poſture leſs convenient, let them condeſcend and ſubmit to kneel. Tho' they had rather receive Sitting, when they may be allowed to do ſo; yet they may receive Kneeling, when there is a Need to kneel. And they muſt needs think it better to kneel to the Holy Communion, than, by ſtopping at a Thing ſo *innocent*, tho' *leſs ſignificant*, to be quite put by, and go without it.

But againſt this Compliance they may, perhaps, *object*, and it is the faireſt Thing which I know ſaid againſt it, That they cannot comply with this *Injunction of Kneeling*, becauſe it is croſs to our *Saviour's Inſtitution*; for as he inſtituted the Holy Sacrament, ſo they think we ought to obſerve, and partake of it.

But to clear this Point, which I ſhall do as plainly as I can, becauſe it ſeems to have ſome Weight in it, I ſhall obſerve,

1. That *if uſing a Poſture different from what our Saviour did in the Holy Communion be a Breaking his Inſtitution, Sitting no leſs than Kneeling is a Breach of it; ſo that they and we are equally concerned to anſwer this Argument.*

The Poſture which our Saviour uſed, was neither *Sitting* nor *Kneeling*, but *another* different from them both. In the *Paſſover* it is plain he uſed *lying* or *leaning down*, which was the *banquetting Geſture* of that Time, when they uſed to eat at their

their Feasts, *lying* upon *Couches*. And thus the *Evangelist* expresses it: *When Even was come*, says St. *Matthew*, *he sate down*; so according to the Custom of these Countries we render it, but the Word is, *he* * *lay down with the Twelve*, Mat. xxvi. 10. And in the 21st of St *John*'s Gospel, St. *John* is said to have *lean'd on Jesus's Breast at Supper*, which tho', as I observed, it be not spoke of the Passover, but of another Supper, which Jesus had two Days before, yet it shews the *Table-Posture* of those Days, when at Meals they lay one within another, *ver.* 20. And this Posture in great Likelihood he continued to use at his own Supper; for they were both *religious Feasts*, and there was no more Reason why it should be excluded from the *one*, than from the *other*. But if when he alter'd his Gesture, according to the *Jewish* Custom, at *giving Thanks*, he continued in that all the Time of his *own Supper*, as some suppose; yet was not that either *Kneeling* or *Sitting*, but a *standing* Posture. So that the Gesture which our Saviour used, was as different from Sitting, as it is from Kneeling. And therefore if the Use of one different from his be a Breach of his Institution, it is equally broken on all Sides, and one cannot urge it against another, but both are alike in Fault, and equally obliged to answer it.

And if any say, That albeit in Sitting they do vary from the Posture which he used, yet it is still to another *Table-Gesture*, which is of the same Nature, and may be held equivalent; I desire them to consider, that then *they* are plainly gone off, as well as *we*, from the *Example of our Lord*, and from the Mode which he used, since, whereas he *lay along*, they *sit upright*; and only stick to such a Gesture, as agrees to the *Nature of the*

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Feast,

Feaſt, and to the Notion of the Communion being a *Supper* and a *Banquet*. So that their Sitting is not authorized by our Lord's having uſed it at firſt, for that he never did; but by its being a Table-Geſture, which becomes a Feaſt, and is thereby ſuited to the Nature of the Holy Sacrament. And when once this Ground is admitted, it will make Way for Kneeling too, ſince there is much alſo in the Nature of the Thing to render it very ſuitable and convenient. For, as upon the Account of its being a *Feaſt*, whilſt they direct their Eye to that, they may be embolden'd to ſit down thereat; ſo alſo upon Account of its being a moſt *venerable* and *religious Feaſt*, whereat all inward *Reverence* and *profound Humility* is required, they may ſee juſt Reaſon to uſe another more lowly Mode, and *kneel* when they receive it. But if ſtill they ſhould think Sitting the more agreeable Mode, and that, it being a Table Geſture, a Supper is beſt ſuited thereby; yet would this be no Reaſon why they cannot *comply* with Kneeling, but only why, if they were left to their own Liberty, they would not make *Choice* of it. For tho' they would not chuſe it, yet are they at Liberty for all that to forbear Sitting, and either to *ſtand*, or *lie*, or *kneel* at a Feaſt, when *Need* requires that they ſhould do ſo. So that whatever it may be to their own *free Choice* of Kneeling, this can be no Hindrance to their Submiſſion and Compliance with it.

But ſince both in *their* Way and *ours*, the Geſture of our Lord, being now out of Date thro' the different Uſage of the World, is quite relinquiſhed; for a full Vindication of them as well as of ourſelves in this Point, I obſerve,

2. That *the Poſture which he uſed was no Part of the Inſtitution, ſo that the Inſtitution is not broken*

when the Posture is altered; yea, neither it, nor any other Posture, has any Precept or Command at all for it; so that no Posture is necessary, but all, both theirs and ours, are still indifferent.

The Posture wherein it was first received, I say, *is no Part of the Institution of a Sacrament; so that the Institution is not broken when the Posture is altered.* It is only the *Thing* which is appointed; but as for the *Posture*, or the *Time*, or the *Place*, or the *Company*, they are little Matters that are unworthy of a particular Appointment, and are left at Liberty to be order'd as Mens Discretion shall judge most convenient. And, indeed, if the *Gesture* which our Lord used, were any Part of the Institution of this Holy Feast, the *Time*, and *Place*, and *other Circumstances* would be so too; for they seem *all of equal Weight*, and were *all* equally *used at first*, which is all that the *Gesture* has to plead for its being a Part thereof. So that if it be a Part of the Institution to receive in the *leaning Posture*, because in his Eating thereof our Lord used that Posture, it is equally a Part of it to receive *after Supper*, which is the Time when he chose to eat his *own Supper*; and in an *upper Room*, which was the Place wherein he celebrated the same; and only with *Men*, who were the Company whom he invited; and those no more than *twelve*, which was the Number he selected to sup with him. *All these* can plead the same Title for being Parts of the Institution, which the Gesture can, *i. e. their being used at the first Appointment of the Holy Sacrament*, which is all the Claim it can make thereto. And therefore since the *Time*, and *Place*, and *Number*, and *Persons* are no Part, but may be alter'd, without any Breach of the Institution, as it is on all Hands concluded they may; the *Posture* is no Part of it, but may

may be alter'd without any ſuch Infringement alſo.

And to ſhew this more fully, it really *has* been done in Sacraments, and that too in the Judgment of our bleſſed Lord himſelf, without any Wrong to the Inſtitution; and that was in the *Jewiſh Paſſover*. For the Poſture wherein it was firſt celebrated, was in that of *Travellers*, with their *Loins girt*, and their *Staves in their Hand*, and their *Shoes on their Feet*; yea, and what makes this Circumſtance more conſiderable in their Caſe, it was by *God's own Order and Appointment*. For *thus ſhall you eat it*, ſaith God, *with your Loins girded, and your Shoes on your Feet, and your Staff in your Hand, and you ſhall eat it in haſte, it is the Lord's Paſſover*, Exod xii. 11. But afterwards, in Compliance with the Courſe of Times, and the Cuſtom of other Countries, this *ſtanding Poſture* of Travellers was changed into the *leaning* or *diſcumbing Poſture* of Men at Eaſe, which Change our Saviour himſelf moſt evidently allowed, by his *own Uſage* and Obſervance of it. For when he eat the *Paſſover* with his *Diſciples*, it was not in the *travelling Poſture* uſed at firſt, but in this *diſcumbing Poſture*, which had been introduced ſince inſtead thereof. *When Even was come Jeſus ſate*, or rather * *lay down to Supper with the Twelve*, Mat. xxvi. 20.

Thus is the Poſture which our bleſſed Lord uſed in the Holy Sacrament no Part of the Inſtitution, ſo that the Inſtitution is not broken when his Poſture is alter'd. And if it had been any Part of it, his *Lying* could no more be changed into *Sitting*, becauſe it is another *Table-Poſture*, than the *Bread* and *Wine* can be changed into any *other Food* or *Liquor*, becauſe they are a *Table-Furniture*. For the Parts of the Bleſſed Sacrament

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muſt be kept the ſame as our Saviour left them, and we muſt not go about to alter and put in others inſtead of them, leſt we be thought to cancel his, and to inſtitute a *new Sacrament* of our own.

Yea, *neither it, nor any other Poſture has any Command at all for it; ſo that no Poſture is neceſſary, but all, both theirs and ours, are ſtill indifferent.* It is not at all enjoin'd by our *Saviour Chriſt*, for he only commands the *Thing*, bidding them *take Bread and eat it, and Wine and drink it*, Mat. xxvi. 26, 27. and to *do this in Remembrance of him*, Luke xxii. 19. but ſays not a Word preſcribing the *Geſture*, *Time*, or *other Circumſtances* which they are to uſe in ſo doing. Neither is it at all mentioned by St. *Paul*, who, as our Lord had done before, commands only, after the Mention of the *Bread*, that we ſhould *do that in Remembrance of him*; and after the Mention of the *Cup*, that we ſhould *drink that in Remembrance of him*; but gives no Command at all concerning *Poſture*, nor any other ſuch inconſiderable and outward Thing, 1 *Cor.* xi. 24, 25. And yet he delivered all that to them which he had received in Command from Chriſt, relating to the Holy Communion: *I have received of the Lord*, ſaith he, *that which I alſo have delivered unto you*, ver. 23. So that altho' God has moſt ſtrictly commanded the *receiving of the Holy Sacrament*, yet has he no where commanded *any Poſture* to be uſed therein; and therefore *none* of them is *neceſſary*, but *all*, both *theirs* and *ours*, are ſtill indifferent.

Thus then is our *kneeling* Poſture at the Holy Communion, as alſo others *Standing* or *Sitting* where that is the Faſhion, no *unlawful* Thing, nor any *Breach* of the *Inſtitution*, tho' our Saviour

viour uſed a *different* one. The Poſture which he communicated in, was *no Part* of the Appointment; ſo that there is no Breach of his Appointment when that Poſture is altered; and neither *it*, nor *any other Poſture* has any *Command* for it; ſo that none of them are either *neceſſary* or *unlawful* upon, but all may ſtill be uſed, either as *publick Authority*, or in Want thereof, as *private Prudence*, and Love of Peace ſhall determine us.

And as the Poſture which was uſed at *firſt*, may be altered without any *Breach* of the *Inſtitution*, or of any *Law of Chriſt*, and a new one lawfully brought in inſtead of it; ſo,

3dly, *When a Poſture different from that at the firſt Inſtitution, was introduced in Sacraments, our bleſſed Lord himſelf, and they themſelves too, have ſubmitted to it.*

As for our *bleſſed Lord*, the Matter is plain of him in the Caſe of the *Paſſover*, which I have mentioned already. He found the Poſture different from that which was at firſt uſed in *Egypt:* For then, as I have noted, they *ſtood* like *Travellers*, but now they *lay down*, like Men at *Reſt* and *Eaſe*. But ſince *common Uſage* and *publick Authority* had altered the former Mode, and ſettled this latter inſtead of it; he would not go to diſpute it, but readily conformed himſelf to it. For when he *came to eat the Paſſover*, ſays St. *Matthew*, *he ſate*, or *rather lay down with the Twelve*, Mat. xxvi. 20.

And as for *themſelves*, they do the ſame Thing too in Sitting, where that is the Poſture, which Law or Cuſtom has introduced among them. For *Sitting* is a Geſture very different from that which our Saviour uſed, who did not *ſit*, but *lie down* at the Holy Sacrament. But when the *Aſſembly of Divines* had brought in this Mode

amongſt us, notwithſtanding its being a Deviation from what was done at firſt, they did then comply with it, and would, it ſeems, adhere to that Change, and do ſo ſtill.

If they will be guided therefore, either by their *Saviour's Practice*, or by *their own*, in this Point; when *Uſe* and *publick Authority* have ſettled any Poſture of Communicating, they muſt ſubmit to receive in that Poſture. The Geſture which they find now among *us*, is not more different from what our *Saviour* uſed, than the Geſture which *he* found in the *Paſſover* was from that which the *Jews* had firſt uſed in *Egypt:* But yet he made no Scruple of this Poſture, ſo plainly novel and of a later Date, but readily complied with it. In Conformity to which *Example* the *Apoſtle* teaches us in *leſſer* Things, to make common Uſages our Rule, for the Prevention of all *Diſputes and Variances: If any Man ſeem to be contentious* in the Caſe of *Womens* being *unveil'd* in the publick Aſſemblies, *we have no ſuch Cuſtom, nor the Church of God*, 1 Cor. xi. 16. And the *Sitting* which they think well of, is as different from our *Saviour's Poſture* as *Kneeling* is; but yet they readily embraced it, when once the *Aſſembly* had directed that it ſhould be uſed. So that if they are but free to follow our *Saviour's Practice* and St. *Paul's Rule* in this Caſe; or if they will go as far with the *Church's Order*, as formerly they did with the *Aſſembly*'s: Since *common Uſage* and *publick Authority* have ſettled Kneeling at the Holy Sacrament among us, they ought not to ſtick out, but to ſubmit to it.

And thus it appears, that their *Compliance* with our Uſe of *Kneeling* in the Holy Communion, is not at all againſt our bleſſed *Saviour's Inſtitution*; ſo that the Fear of wronging that ought not to hinder

hinder any of them from complying. It is indeed, a *different* Posture from what our Lord first used; but if that be a Breach of his *Institution*, *Sitting* no less than *Kneeling* is a Breach of it; so that *they* and *we* are *equally* concerned to answer it. But in Behalf of *both* it is easily answerd, That the *Posture which he used*, was *no Part* of the *Institution* of the Blessed Sacrament; so that the Institution is not broken, when the Posture is altered. That neither *it*, nor *any other Posture*, has any *Precept* for it; so that none of them is *necessary*, but all of them are *indifferent* and *lawful* to be used, according as Mens own *private Judgment* and *Discretion*, where they are left to that, shall direct, or as *publick Authority* and *Custom* shall any where prescribe. And that when *these* have in any Place introduced a Posture *different* from what *he* used, *he himself*, by his own Practice in this very Case, and *they* too who make this Objection, by *theirs*, have taught us to comply therewith.

But against this Compliance it is by some still farther urged, that *Kneeling* in the Holy Sacrament is *worshipping the Bread*, and a *Popish Rite*, and that therefore they dare not *yield* and *conform* to it.

Now in Answer to its being a *Worshipping the Bread*, I would observe to them, that there is *no Fear* of that, because *we do not kneel to the Bread*, nor *have any Intention to worship it*; and if really we *did intend to worship the Bread*, *without which there is no Adoration paid to it*, *we should worship it whether we kneel or sit*; so that as to this Point of *worshipping the Bread*, *their Mode* and *ours* are *equally concerned*, and it must be owned on all Sides, that where that happens, not the *Posture*, but the *Intention* is to be blamed for it.

1. In *Kneeling at the Holy Sacrament*, I say, *there is no Fear of worshipping the Bread*, because *we do not kneel to it, nor have any Intention to worship it.* If we should *kneel down to the Bread*, indeed, and, submitting ourselves before it, pay *divine Honour* and *Homage* to it; this were really to *worship the Bread.* And this the *Papists* plainly do in that *Reverence* which they shew towards it. For they verily believe it to be *transubstantiated*, i. e. that the Substance of the Bread, after the Words of Consecration, is passed into the natural Body and Blood of Christ, which, with his human Soul, has his Divinity hypostatically united to it: And upon this Belief, they fall down to it with a Design to reverence it, and to give as much Adoration to it as they would to Christ himself, were he visibly present. But altho' this be *their* Intention, yet is it in no Case *ours* in Kneeling at the Sacrament. For we kneel not to the *Bread*, to give any *Homage* and *Adoration* unto it, as our * *Church* has most expressly declared in the *Rubrick*; so that if any Persons intend any such Thing, they must not say they follow the *Church* in that, since in the most earnest and express Words it utterly disclaims and warns us all against it. But we use Kneeling to a quite different End, *viz.* only as it is a *reverential humble*

* *It is hereby declared, that thereby* (viz. *by* Kneeling) *no Adoration is intended, or ought to be done, either unto the Sacramental Bread and Wine there bodily received, or unto any corporeal Presence of Christ's natural Flesh and Blood. For the Sacramental Bread and Wine remain still in their natural Substances, and therefore may not be adored (for that were Idolatry, to be abhorred of all faithful Christians.) And the natural Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ are in Heaven, and not here; it being against the Truth of Christ's natural Body to be at one Time in more Places than one.* Rub. at the End of the Communion Service.

Posture,

Poſture *, wherein we may very *decently receive Gifts*, and *make Confeſſion of our Sins*, and *give Thanks*, and *pour out our Prayers* to *Almighty God:* So that our Kneeling is only unto *God*, who is the proper Object of our Worſhip, but not at all to the *Bread*, which is never intended to be ſerved, nor receives any Homage or Submiſſion by it. This, I ſay, is all we do in Kneeling at the Holy Sacrament, as the *Church* requires, and as our own *Conſciences* bear us Witneſs, which are the only ſure Judges in this Caſe, ſince they alone do thoroughly underſtand, and are privy to our own Intents and Purpoſes. And when both our *Church* and *we* do thus openly profeſs that we *kneel not* to the *Bread*, nor have any Intention thereby to worſhip and ſubmit ourſelves to it; there is none ſure will be ſo raſh and unchriſtianly cenſorious as to charge us with it. But if any do, they are thereby guilty, not only of an *open Uncharitableneſs*, in imputing the worſt Things to us without any juſt Cauſe; but alſo of *great Preſumption* and *high Arrogance*, ſince therein they take upon them to teach us our own Thoughts, and tell us our own Hearts and Intentions better than we can tell ourſelves.

2. If in *Kneeling* at the Holy Sacrament we *ſhould have any ſuch Intention*, without which there is no *Adoration* paid to the Bread, we *ſhould worſhip whether we kneel or ſit*; ſo that *their* Mode and *ours* are *equally concerned* in this Doubt, and it muſt be owned on all Sides, that where ſuch Worſhip is paid to Bread, it is not the *Poſture*, but the *Intention* which is to be blamed for it. For when

* *Which Order (of* Kneeling) *is well meant, for a Signification of our humble and grateful Acknowledgement of the Benefits of Chriſt therein given to all worthy Receivers.* Rub. at the End of the Communion Service.

we

we design Worship to any Object, we can give it by a bare *inward Homage* and *Submission of the Mind*, without the Help of any *outward* Act; or, if we would make it a Worship of the *Body* too, that may be done by *any Posture* wherein we design to express it. It may be done *Sitting*, as well as in a more *humble Mode*; for tho' that seem to shew more of *Familiarity* than *Respect*, yet has it sometimes been used for the *Posture* of *Worship*. Thus the *Gentiles* worshipped their *Gods*, as *Tertullian** tells us; *The Nations*, says he, *worship their Images Sitting*. And thus also the *Jews* sometimes worshipped in their *religious Feasts*, when they fed upon their *Sacrifices*, 1 Sam. ix. 13, 22. For so it was plainly in the Worship of the *Golden Calf*, where, after they had offered their *Burnt-Offerings* and their *Peace-Offerings*, *they sate down to eat and to drink upon what they had offered*, Exod. xxxii. 6. So that if any of those who *kneel*, are guilty of worshipping the Bread, their *Kneeling* must not be accused for it, since, when giving Worship is their Intention, they would be guilty of the same Thing if they *sate*. And therefore it is not the Posture, which were very commendable were it directed unto God, but the mis-applying it unto the *Bread*, and using it with that *irreligious Intention*, which is to bear the Blame thereof.

As for those then, who are afraid to *kneel at the Holy Sacrament*, for fear lest thereby, with the *Papists*, they should *worship the Bread*; my Answer in brief is this. To *worship the Bread*, as the *Papists* do, is to *kneel down to it*, and to pay

* Cum perinde faciant Nationes adoratis Sigillaribus suis residendo, vel propterea in nobis reprehendi meretur (viz. *sitting at Prayers*) quod apud Idola celebratur. *Tertul. de Orat.* C. xii.

divine

divine Honour and *Adoration* to it, becauſe they *believe Chriſt bodily preſent* therein; and *this may be done in any Poſture*, either *Sitting* or *Kneeling*, when any Perſons *intend* ſuch Worſhip to the Bread; and *without ſuch Intent*, we do not worſhip the Bread by *Kneeling* in the Holy Sacrament; and *they are beſt able to tell themſelves* whether in Receiving they *intend* any ſuch Thing to the Bread or no; and if *they ſay they do not*, it is *great Arrogance*, as well as *Uncharitableneſs* in *others*, *to charge them therewith*; and if *they have any ſuch Deſign*, they muſt not ſay it is to *comply with our Church*, becauſe it *expreſly declares againſt it*, and *warns them of the Danger of it*. If they *worſhip the Bread*, their *Kneeling* is *no Cauſe* of that Worſhip; and if they are ſo minded, they may *uſe that Poſture* only to *confeſs their Sins*, and *give Thanks*, and *make Prayers*, by all which they *worſhip God*; and if ſtill *they will worſhip the Bread by Kneeling*, they *go off from the Injunction of the Church*, *which would deter them from doing ſo*. So that *their Submiſſion* to the *Church's Order* in this Caſe, can put them in no Danger of worſhipping the Bread; and therefore in complying with her, they have no Cauſe at all to be afraid of it.

And then, as for this Kneeling in the Sacrament being a *Popiſh Rite*, if they mean that the *Papiſts uſe it*, they may call their own *Sitting* a *Popiſh Rite* too upon the ſame Ground, becauſe that alſo is ſometimes uſed by them in Receiving. For the *Benedictine Monks*, as * *Didoclavius*, a zealous Aſ-

* Hodie in Cathedralibus Eccleſiis & Monaſteriis Benedictinorum, in Die Cœnæ Domini ante Paraſceuen, &c. Evangelium Joannis à Diacono publice prælegitur, & dulciſſima illa colloquia Chriſti, quæ abiturus cum diſcipulis habuit, recitantur: interim ordine diſpoſitis menſis, convivæ aſſident, panem azymum frangentes, &c. *Didoclav. Alt. Damaſc.* C. x. p. 746.

ſertor

ſertor of the *ſitting Mode*, has obſerved from *Bullinger*, *Sit at the Communion ſometimes, yea, and the Pope himſelf at certain Times doth ſo.* For thus much *William Thomas*, an Eye-Witneſs of it, in the Year 1547, plainly teſtifies, as the * *Quench-Coal* ſays. And the ſame in his Hiſtory of *Italy*, *Durandus* † alſo clearly affirms: And likewiſe the *Book* of the *ſacred Ceremonies* ‡ ſufficiently intimates it in one Caſe, *viz.* at the *Coronation of the Emperors. Sitting* and *Kneeling* then are *both* equal as to this Point, that the *Papiſts uſe them:* But that need not make us throw them away as *Popiſh Rites*, or be any Diſparagement to *either* of them. For the *Papiſts* have many *harmleſs* Things, and many *very good*, as well as many *bad* among them. They have the *Scriptures*, which are nevertheleſs the *Word of God* becauſe they *read* them; and the *Creed*, and the *Lord's Prayer*, which none of us will caſt aſide becauſe they *uſe* them; and *kneel at their Prayers*, which yet we ought not to diſclaim for fear of *ſymbolizing* with them: So that both *Sitting* and *Kneeling* may be *good* Things among *us*, tho' both are uſed by *them* too.

But if by a *Popiſh Rite*, they mean that it is one of the *Corruptions of Popery*, whereby they have depraved *Chriſtianity*; that is a great Miſ-

* *Quench-Coal*, p. 12.

† Summus Pontifex ad ſedem aſcendens, ibique conſidens, univerſis cernentibus, majorem partem oblatæ ſuſcipit de Patina quam Subdiaconus apportaverat de Altari, ipſamque Dentibus ſubdividens, unam particulam ejus ſumit, & aliam in Calicem mittit, &c. *Durand. Ration. Divin. Offic.* l. iv. c. 54. Num. 4. p. 203.

‡ Imperator retrahens ſe ad partem dextram, ſtat uſque quo Pontifex ad ſedem eminentem communicaturus revertatur, quem Imperator ſequitur, *Lib. Sacr. Cærem. S. Rom. Eccl.* l. i. ſect. 5. c. 3. p. 59.

take,

take, which has no Colour of Reaſon or Ground at all for it. For Kneeling is not only a very *innocent*, but a very *decent* Poſture wherein to *receive Gifts*, and *make humble Confeſſion of our Sins*, and *put up Prayers* and *Supplications to Almighty God*; all which we are to do in the *Holy Sacrament*. It is probably a much more *ancient Rite*, and either *it*, or ſome *other Poſture of Reverence* and *Adoration*, which is of the ſame Account with it, was uſed in the *Communion* long before *Popery*, i. e. the *Popiſh Errors* and *Corruptions*, which are a novel and upſtart Religion, had any Footing.

But then in further Return to this Exception, I muſt obſerve to them, that, on the other hand, the Way of *Sitting at the Holy Table*, which they contend for, is a *Socinian Rite*, which they firſt introduced into the *Proteſtant* Churches, and that in Diſreſpect and Irreverence to *Chriſt* himſelf, whoſe Death is there ſet forth, to ſhew that *they held him for a mere Man*, and *denied his God-head*. And on this Account, when other Poſtures, as *Standing* or *Kneeling*, have been left indifferent in the Holy Sacrament, *Sitting* has been particularly rejected and forbid by *Proteſtants*, in Deteſtation of its having been firſt introduced among them by theſe Men, and that upon ſo very impious and horrible a Deſign. As for *Standing* or *Kneeling*, ſays the *General Synod* of *Petracow* in *Poland*, held in the Year of our Lord 1578. *Men may be at Liberty to uſe either, as they pleaſe. But as for Sitting at the Lord's Table, becauſe that is contrary to the Rites commonly uſed in all the Proteſtant Churches throughout* Europe; *and becauſe they were the firſt Authors and Introducers thereof among us, unſkilfully pretending Chriſt's Example for the ſame, who as treacherous Runagates are fallen from us to the* Arians: *Therefore we have rejected it, as pro-*

per

per to them, who distinguish themselves by their irreverent Treatment, as of Christ himself, so also of his holy Ordinances; and as a Ceremony less decent and religious, and which is very apt to scandalize weak Minds.*

As for this *Objection* then against *complying* with the Injunction of *Kneeling* in the Holy Sacrament, *viz.* its being a *Worshipping the Bread*, and a *Popish Rite*; there is really no Weight in it. For they cannot *worship the Bread* in *complying* with the *Church*, since it *forbids* them to worship it. Nor are they chargeable with any Thing therein that is *truly* and *culpably Popish*, tho' the *Papists* use the same Posture (as indeed they do Sitting too, which yet is never the worse for their Use thereof;) because Kneeling at the Communion is none of the *Corruptions of Popery*, (as *Sitting* among *Protestants* at first was of *Socinianism*) but either *it*, or some other Posture of *Adoration* which is of equal Danger with it, as to the Matter of Worship, was in *Use* in *Christianity* before the *Popish Errors* were introduced. So that altho' they cannot see Reason enough to desire this Way, nor would receive Kneeling, were another Posture allowed in Receiving; yet since the Sacrament is

* Thus Synod. Gen. Petracovienſis, An. Dom. 1598, Mense Junio, *Decree that the Posture of Receiving should be either* Stantes *or* Genuflectentes: And *say of Sitting*, Sessionis vero ad mensam Domini, quia præter Ritus in omnibus per Europam Evangelicis Ecclesiis vulgo consuetos illi inter nos primi autores extiterunt, qui omnia temere in Ecclesia immutantes, & sine scientia Christum quasi imitantes, à nobis ad Arianismum perfidi Transfugæ facti sunt; quare hanc propriam ipsis (ut Christum, ita & Sacra ejus irreverenter tractantibus) & tanquam minus honestam ac religiosam, simplicioribusque admodum scandalosam Cæremoniam rejecimus.

So Synod Gen. Cracov. Anno 1573. *Act 6. which permits Ceremonies in the Sacrament to Christian Liberty.* Monemur à patribus, ut qui Sessione in Sacra cœna utuntur, eam Ceremoniam quasi Arianobaptistis propriam relinquant.

not

not otherwiſe to be had, they may very ſafely and wiſely comply with it, and ſubmit to it ſtill.

And thus I have conſidered this *Impediment*, whereby many good Minds, who are ſenſible of the Duty of it, and are otherwiſe very well prepared for it, are yet unhappily kept back from the *Holy Sacrament*. And the Reſult of all is this, That when they ſtay away upon this Account, becauſe *they will not kneel in receiving the ſame*, they refrain upon a moſt unjuſtifiable Ground, which will afford them no *Excuſe*, nor ought in any Reaſon to be their *Hindrance*. For *Kneeling* is really no *unſuitable*, but a very *decent Poſture*; ſo that if we were left at *Liberty* to receive how we would, we might have enough to *juſtify ourſelves* in making *uſe* of it. And it is *appointed by our Governors*, whom God commands us to obey in all *lawful Things*; ſo that in regard to *their* having *preſcribed* it, every *good Man* among us *ought to obſerve it*. And if neither *Authority* could impoſe it, nor it had any *Reaſon* from itſelf to recommend it, but that *Sitting* were on all Accounts much *fitter* to be uſed; yet ſince in their own Account *it* may *lawfully* be uſed too, and is only, as they conceive, a *leſs decent* Mode, but has no Sin or Offence in it; if they have any earneſt Deſire for the Sacrament, which is not otherwiſe to be had, for its *Sake* they will at leaſt *comply* with *Kneeling*. If they rate Things truly, ſince *Authority* has *enjoyn'd* it, they will ſee themſelves *obliged* to uſe it. But however, ſince their Saviour has laid no Weight upon it, but accepts of a truly devout Mind at his Table in any Poſture; tho' they had rather uſe another, yet is there nothing to hinder their Compliance and Submiſſion to uſe this. So that there is no juſt Pretence for any, upon this Account, to refrain coming to the Bleſſed Sacrament.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Of ſome other Hindrances.

The CONTENTS.

An Account of ſome other Hindrances. One abſtains from the Holy Sacrament, becauſe the Day before he was at a Feaſt. Another, becauſe his Child is ſick, or he himſelf is lightly indiſpoſed. A Third, becauſe his Wife, or Huſband cannot come along with him to join therein. A Fourth, becauſe he has a Viſit to make, or a Friend is come in, who in all Civility muſt be attended. A Fifth, becauſe of a Shower of Rain, or a ſharp Air abroad, ſo that he muſt endure a piercing Blaſt, or wet his Foot to go out to it. Theſe are no Excuſe from it, but ſtill Men are bound to communicate.

HAVING hitherto conſidered thoſe *Pleas* which ſeem to be of moſt Weight in hindering Men from the Holy Sacrament, and poſſeſs them either with a *Scruple*, that they dare not, or with an *important Reaſon* why they ſhould not chuſe to come to it; before I diſmiſs *this* Head, I ſhall take Notice of ſome *others*, which, though of leſs Moment, may yet ſeem fit to be conſidered.

Men oft-times give ſuch Reaſons for their Neglect of the Bleſſed Sacrament, as are Reaſons to themſelves for neglecting nothing elſe that is of half that Moment. *The Unſeaſonableneſs of the Weather, the Sickneſs of a Child, the paying a Compliment to a Friend*, or the like, is thought a ſufficient,

cient Hindrance from the Communion: Whereas it would not hinder them from any Buſineſs, which either *Friendſhip*, their *own Pleaſure*, or their *Profit* requires of them. For how cogent ſoever they may account them in keeping them back from *it*, they would not be with-held by them from purſuing any *Sport*, or from driving an *advantageous Bargain*, or carrying on any *End* or *Intereſt*, or *ſerving their Friend*, in any *Buſineſs*, or *Affairs of Moment*. And can any Man now have the Face to give that for a Reaſon to Almighty God, which he would be aſhamed to offer as a Reaſon to any one elſe? Can he expect to excuſe the *Neglect of a weighty Duty unto him*, by ſuch trifling Apologies as would not excuſe the *Neglect of a Bargain*, nay, nor of a *Paſtime* to *himſelf*; nor of a *Concern of Weight*, or, perhaps, of a *Compliment* to his *Companions?* Thoſe Men are ſurely in a ſad Caſe, who are forced to ſeek Shelter under ſuch thin Pretences; and rather than make ſuch trifling Pleas for any Act of Diſobedience, it were by much the wiſer Courſe to be wholly ſilent, and not ſeek to defend themſelves at all.

When theſe Pleas are made then, there is no Excuſe in them. And indeed they would not be made by any Men, if once they were convinced how much it is both their *Duty* and their *Intereſt* to come to the Holy Communion. For when they are detained by ſuch frivolous Reaſons, as would not either be urged, or admitted in Excuſe for any other Buſineſs; they ſhew only their great Indifference to it, and how they eſteem it leſs than any other Matters: And this they could not do, if they held it either as a valuable Privilege, or as a Point of Conſcience. The beſt Way therefore to remove theſe Hindrances from the Sacra-

ment, is to poſſeſs Men with a Belief that God has peremptorily enjoined them to partake in it, and that it is infinitely their own Intereſt and high Privilege to be admitted to it. And having ſhew'd theſe very largely in the *Second* Part, I ſhall refer the *Reader* unto that, as a very likely Way, not only to anſwer *theſe*, but alſo to prevent all *other* ſuch like Pleas againſt it.

But that ſuch Perſons as are ſerious in theſe Hindrances, may not think themſelves too much ſlighted, beſides this *general* Anſwer, I ſhall ſay ſomething to the *Particulars*.

1. *One* keeps away from the Holy Sacrament, becauſe *the Day before* either *he himſelf has made a Feaſt*, or *has been treated by his Neighbour at a noble Entertainment*. But why, I pray, muſt this excuſe it? For if at the Feaſt he was guilty of any *incapacitating Offence*, or any ways *intemperate*; it is not the *Feaſt*, but ſuch *Offence* or *Intemperance* which is to be alledged for it. But if the Entertainment was *friendly* in the *Deſign*, *temperate* at the *Table*, and every Way *harmleſs* and *charitable*, hurting no Man's *Fame*, nor diſturbing any Man's *Quiet* in the Converſation; wherein was his Lord offended, or his Soul unfitted for this Holy Supper thereby? The *primitive Chriſtians* received it at a friendly Treat, for in thoſe Days their *Love-Feaſts* always went along with it: So that an hoſpitable Entertainment the Day *before*, yea, or even the *ſame* Day, doth not unfit Men to communicate; but if in all Things elſe they are duly qualified, they may worthily receive ſtill.

2. *Another* abſtains from this Holy Feaſt, becauſe *his Child is ſick*, or becauſe *he has taken cold himſelf*, or *has ſome aching in his Head*, or *is otherwiſe lightly indiſpoſed*,

But

But what if his *Child is ſick?* Doth he attend it? Or is it adviſeable for him to be ſo far diſturbed at his Child's Illneſs, till his Mind is unfit for thoſe religious Tempers which he is to exerciſe at the Holy Sacrament? Perhaps his Child fares the worſe, becauſe of ſome Sin which he has committed; and will he not then inſtantly repent of his Sins, and come to the Lord's Table, there to have his Pardon ſealed for the ſame, that ſo this Load may be taken off, and it may find Eaſe by his coming? But whether that be ſo or no, if he has any Senſe of Religion, either in his *Child*'s Caſe, or his *own*, he will be earneſtly deſirous to make God his Phyſician, and call out to him for Help: And that he cannot do ſo effectually, or prevail in it ſo certainly at any other Time, as I have ſhewed, as in the Holy Sacrament. For God is never more enclined to hear us, nor are we ever more likely to have our Prayers granted for any Thing that he ſees fit for us, than when we ſend them up along with this ſolemn Commemoration of our Saviour's Death, which is the only Argument that has Authority and Power with him, to obtain any Thing on our Behalf. So that if a wiſe Man longs to have his Child recovered, he cannot do a more unwiſe Thing, than either to grieve ſo far till he is *unfitted* for this Holy Feaſt, or, when he might be fit for it, to *neglect* the ſame, ſince his Prayers there would be a moſt *probable* and *prudent* Courſe to obtain it.

And then as for his *own Indiſpoſition*, if indeed it has brought upon him ſuch *Heavineſs* as unfits him for any ſpiritual Act, or if it is in that Degree that it is not *ſafe* for him to ſtir abroad with it; God prefers *natural* and *eſſential Duties* before *poſitive Inſtitutions*, and *Mercy* before *Sacrifice*, ſo

that it will be a juſt Excuſe for his ſtaying away from the Holy Sacrament. But if it cannot hinder him from looking after Buſineſs, and going among his Neighbours, or venturing out upon any Appearance of doing either himſelf or his Friend a Kindneſs: Why muſt it excuſe him from attending upon God, and doing him this Service? except that be thought ſufficient to excuſe our Attendance upon him which excuſes nothing elſe; which is a Thing, I preſume, they would be loath to own, who ſtay away by Reaſon of this Hinderance.

3. *Some* again refrain the Holy Sacrament, becauſe *their Wife* or *Huſband cannot bear them Company, and join with them in the Receipt thereof.* One of them is either *accidentally prevented* that they *cannot*, or, *ſinfully negligent* and *unprepared*, that they *will not* come to it; and therefore in Compliance, and for Company's Sake, the other alſo keeps away at preſent, and defers it to another Time, when both may receive together.

This, I think, is a *popular*, but it is a very *weak* Excuſe. For the Receiving the Communion is an indiſpenſable Duty, concerning which every Perſon muſt give Account of *themſelves* unto Almighty God; ſo that one near Relation can no more talk of neglecting it for the other's Sake, than of neglecting to ſay their *Prayers* and *ſerve God*, becauſe the other doth it not, or of being *irreligious* to ſymbolize with ſome dear Friends, and *caſting away* their *precious Souls* out of *Compliment*. Nay, if he had not thus *enjoined* us, but had only *friendly invited* us to communicate; yet would it be a very *rude* and *diſobliging* Thing to refuſe his Invitation upon this Account, becauſe ſome others, who are very dear to us, have not either

either the Opportunity or good Manners to accept thereof. For if an *Husband* or a *Wife* will not receive unless the *other* also will consent to receive too; it is a Sign they come not so much for the *Lord*'s, as for *each other's* Sake, so that *they*, and not their *Saviour*, have the Service and the Honour of it; and this is an odd Account for any Man to give to Christ of his neglecting this Holy Feast, when he is most affectionately and earnestly invited to it.

When any Persons stay away from the Sacrament then, because they cannot have their Bosom-Friend to join with them therein; they are guilty of a *great Sin* (since one is bound to it whether the other comes, or not) and pass a *great Affront* and *Dishonour* upon their Lord, so that this is far from having any Excuse in it. Nay, instead of being a Reason why they should abstain from it, the Neglect of one dear Relation lays a greater Obligation on the other to communicate. For when one cannot come, so that there must be a Defect on that Part, that is *too much* already, since neither ought to be wanting in this Service; and therefore there is the *more Need* that the other should receive, not only thereby to shew their *own Duty*, but also to *supply their Friend's Defect* as well as they can, and make amends for it.

4. A *Fourth* absents himself from this Holy Feast, because *that Day he is to visit a Friend abroad*, or *has a Friend accidentally come in to dine with him, who must, in all Civility, be attended.*

But why must our Respects to our Saviour and our other Friends be made thus to *interfere*, so that *one* must needs be a Temptation to omit the *other?* How comes it that of all the Days in the Month we fix upon that for visiting or entertaining of our Friends, when our Blessed Lord in-

vites us to his Table, there to entertain us? Or if by Accident a Friend then breaks in upon us, why must that detain us when Christ calls us? Is it any Part of his Friendship to make us disobey our Lord, or to put us by embracing this high Honour and most advantageous Opportunity when it is graciously offer'd? Or if he be God's Friend too as well as ours, is it not very fit that he should go also and join with us? When to communicate is a Duty in both of us, is it anywise reasonable that he should make us stay away, and not go along with us? But if it happen that a Friend who is *unwilling* to *communicate* falls in to be entertained, or a Visit at that Time would be expected; since our Saviour and they cannot be attended too, which ought in Reason to be preferred? Is there any to whom we owe more Respect and Observance than we do to Christ Jesus? Should we affect the Company, or court the Conversation of any Person, more than his? Are there any who ought more highly to be valued by us, or have better deserved of us, or whom we should study more to make our Friend, than him who has gained us eternal Life, and that by laying down his own Heart's Blood for the Purchase? When more *honourable Persons*, or *better Friends* invite us, let us turn our backs upon his Table, and pay *them* Attendance. But since he can have no Competitors in this Case, where is the *Justice*, the *Honour*, and *Respect* to him, when this is given as a Reason of our Absence?

5. A *Fifth* neglects the Holy Sacrament, because of a *Shower of Rain*, or *of a sharp Air abroad; so that he must, altho' not much, prejudice or endanger his Health; (in which Case, as I said, God is willing to have Mercy take Place of Sacrifice) yet however, endure a piercing Blast*, or *wet his Foot if he goes out for it.* But

But is he thus tender of himself in any other Matters? And would these dreadful Scare-crows put him by any other Concerns which fright him from this Ordinance? If they stood in the Way of his *Pleasures*, would he refrain them? If they lay between him and his *worldly Interests*, would he be discouraged by them? If they met him in the Way as he were going to *do his Friend a Kindness*, would they cause him to turn back again? Tho' they would not *justify* it, yet when they hinder him from these, and such like Matters, they may with more *Colour be pleaded* in Excuse of his Absence from the *Lord's Supper*. But are not Men much at a Loss for Excuse to shift off this Duty, when such as this, so full of palpable Contempt and a careless Spirit, must serve their Turn, and be thought sufficient? And have not we an hard Task to *conduct them on to eternal Happiness*, which must put them upon *fighting* and *striving*, and *giving all Diligence*, and *denying themselves*, and *taking up the Cross*, and *plucking out right Eyes*, and *cutting off right Hands*, &c. when they stumble thus at *Straws*, and are beat back by the Force of every *Feather* which is blown in their Faces? and such Trifles as these can discourage their going on in the most weighty Duties, and make them recoil again upon our Hands?

CHAP. VIII.

Devotions fitted for the Holy Sacrament.

The CONTENTS.

A Meditation and Prayer for the exciting and exerciſing the Grace of Thankfulneſs in the Communicant. Another for the Exerciſe of Charity. A Third, *for the Exerciſe of Reſignation to God's Will. A* Fourth, *for the Exerciſe of Repentance. Some other Forms of Devotion, both at, and after Receiving. After we have received, we muſt be careful to make good thoſe holy Vows and Promiſes, which we made to God in the Holy Sacrament.*

AS for all theſe Excuſes then, which *careleſs* Men, who make *no Conſcience* of the Holy Sacrament, give for their Abſence from it, they will not ſtand them in any Stead; nay, they are ſuch as no wiſe Man dare own, when once they are examined. They ſhew nothing elſe but the *Diſregard Men* have of Chriſt, their *Unaffectedneſs* with all that he has done and ſuffered for them, their *abſolute Indifference* to have it *remembred*, and their *utter Contempt of this Duty*, which he has commanded them. They are a good Evidence of their own *careleſs*, *undutiful*, and *irreverent* Mind, and manifeſt how little they ſet by their Bleſſed Lord; ſo that the urging of them is a ready Way to give *more Offence*, but not to make any *Excuſe* at all.

And

And thus I have done with all those *Pleas* which are wont, I think, most *generally* to *keep Men from the Communion*, and would be most apt to hinder those Things, which I have said about the *Duty* and *Advantage* of it in the *second* Part, from having their due Effect upon them. Among these, there are some, perhaps, may seem to be *little* Objections: But little as they are, they are an Hindrance to some Minds; and since it is not below them to stop at them, I am far from thinking it too trivial and low a Thing for me to answer them. And upon the whole Matter it appears, that to communicate is a *great Duty*, and a *great Benefit*, and that none of those *Pleas* which are ordinarily urged for it, can in any just Sort *excuse* Mens *Neglect* of the Blessed Sacrament. For neither their *Unworthiness to partake of it*, nor the Danger of *Damnation threatened to every unworthy Communicant*, nor the *Fear of breaking that Promise of new Life which is made therein*, nor the *apprehended Difficulty* and *Want of Leisure to prepare for it*, nor their *being unbettered and unimproved by it*, nor the *Want of that Charity which is to be professed at it*, nor the *having some Enemies, after all their Endeavours for Reconciliation, still unreconciled to them*, nor the *seeming Presumption in joining in this sacred Feast*, nor the *customary Absence of many good People from it*, nor the *Admittance of unworthy Receivers to it*, nor the *Imposition of Kneeling at it:* Neither *these*, I say, nor any *other* Impediment whereby Men are apt to excuse it to their own Minds, can really justify and bear them out in absenting themselves from the Lord's Table, when they are invited to it. No *ill* Man *can be excused*, and no *good* Man *need* to be *hindred* by them. So that every Man, as he

he tenders our bleſſed Lord's Command, and his own Soul's everlaſting Intereſt, muſt be careful reverently and devoutly to partake in this Holy Feaſt, when he has an Opportunity, and is called ſo to do.

And now I have gone thro' all thoſe *Particulars* which I propoſed at the Beginning of this Book, and which I thought moſt proper to be inſiſted on, to engage Men to a worthy *Reception* of the Holy Sacrament: I have ſhewn what is the *Meaning of eating* and *drinking in this myſterious Feaſt*, and *wherein the Worthineſs of doing it lies*, and *what ſtrict Obligations we have to do ſo*, and *how great Benefits we are like to receive by it*; and *anſwered thoſe Pleas which are moſt generally given out to excuſe the Neglect thereof:* And this, with all *honeſt* Minds, who are deſirous and free to *hear*, and will have the *Patience* to *conſider*, may ſeem ſufficient to enforce a due Attendance on it. And when once Men are ſo diſpoſed, and ſeriouſly reſolved to communicate, I ſhall add a few Things to aſſiſt them in a right Diſcharge of this Duty, and ſo conclude this Subject.

When we come to the Holy Sacrament, to *commemorate the Death of our bleeding Lord*, whoſe *Body* there is repreſented as *broken*, and his moſt precious *Blood* as *ſhed*, upon our Account; we are to ſhew forth an *affectionate* and *hearty Thankfulneſs* for ſo invaluable a Kindneſs, and entire *Reſignation of ourſelves to his Uſe and Service*, and *true Repentance of all our Sins*, fully purpoſing to amend them all thenceforwards, and an *univerſal Peace* and *Charity towards all our Neighbours*; all which we muſt excite in our own Souls by due Conſiderations.

1. We muſt ſhew forth an *affectionate* and *hearty Thankfulneſs for ſo invaluable a Kindneſs.* And

And what Soul can be ſlow to pay this, who conſiders how *infinitely our dear Lord has deſerved of us?* For he has got us the moſt *precious* and *glorious* Things which Heaven itſelf could afford, *viz.* that *all our Sins* ſhould be *freely pardoned*, and that the *Holy Ghoſt*, that *immenſe*, *eternal*, and *all-ſufficient Spirit*, ſhould come in at all Times to our *Help*, and that we ſhould be in no leſs Quality than that of the *Sons of God*, and *Heirs of a Kingdom*, who are aſſured of *eternal Joys* and *Glories* in another World. And ought not *Gifts* ſo *auguſt* and *ſuperlatively excellent*, to be moſt *affectionately acknowledg'd?* He has bought all theſe, to beſtow upon us, at the *deareſt Rate*, not only taking the moſt *unwearied Pains*, but alſo paying the *higheſt Price*, and *laying down his own moſt precious Blood for the Purchaſe.* And muſt not ſuch *aſtoniſhing Kindneſs*, which was affrighted by no Hazards, nor ſtopt at any Difficulties, nor declined any Sufferings, not the Suffering of Death itſelf, for our Sakes, be always held in a moſt *thankful Remembrance?* And in all this he had no *Ends of his own* to ſerve of us, but was led on purely by the Pleaſure which he takes in our Happineſs. He was not *won by our Deſerts*; for, alas! we were his *profeſs'd Enemies*, who had nothing to ſhew but higheſt Provocations; he was not *wearied* out with the *Importunity of our Intreaties*, for it came, as *undeſerved*, ſo altogether *unaſked*, whatſoever he did for us; he was not *moved* by the *Mediation of Friends*; for whom, alas! had we to *intercede* for us? And ſhall not ſuch *amazing Love* and *Goodneſs*, ſo *frankly* ſhew'd, without any Eye at *Self-Ends* or *private Intereſts*, without *Intreaties* or *Deſerts*, nay, in Spite of all *Diſcouragements* and *higheſt Provocations*, be entertain'd with *greateſt Joy* and *grateful Acclamations?* He has

been

been an *infinitely endearing* and *intire Friend* to us, without any Inducement but his own moſt *generous Kindneſs*, and *againſt all Diſcouragements*, and *beyond all Bounds*, and *under the moſt frightful Hazards*, and *at the higheſt Expences*, giving his *own Soul* even to *Death*, for a Ranſom to redeem *ours*. And whenſoever we hear or think of this, I am confident it will not be difficult for any of us to embrace him with Hearts full of *Love* and *holy Deſires*, and to pay him moſt *intire Thanks*, and burſt out into *Songs of Praiſe*, and find it a moſt *joyful Buſineſs* ſo to do.

" What am I, my dear Lord, will a devout " Mind then ſay, that thou ſhouldeſt leave the " right Hand of God, and come to viſit me? " Hadſt thou no Eaſe in thy own Breaſt ſo long " as I lay plunged in Miſery? And couldeſt not " thou be happy in Heaven, nor enjoy thyſelf " amidſt all the Joys and Glories of that bliſsful " Place, unleſs I were there to bear thee Com- " pany? How cameſt thou, being ſo highly ex- " alted, and the eternal Son of God, to have an " affectionate Concern at all for me? Was not I " a deformed polluted Wretch, and thy profeſs'd " Enemy? And were not theſe enough to turn " away thy Face from me? But if, notwithſtand- " ing all this, thy overflowing Goodneſs would " put thee upon doing ſomething for my Sake, " why muſt thou come thyſelf upon the Earth, " nay, come to bleed and die, to redeem me? " Am I dearer to thee than thy own Life, " that thou ſhouldeſt part with it to ſave me? " Doſt thou love me better than thou loveſt thy- " ſelf, that thou wilt ſhed the laſt Drop of thy " own Heart's Blood to make me happy? Bleſſed " Jeſus! how unfathomable is thy Grace, and

" what

" what an unſearchable Depth of Love is this,
" which thou haſt opened to us, poor miſerable
" Sinners! O how happy do I think myſelf in it,
" and how doth my Heart rejoice at the Remem-
" brance of it! Lord! I love thee dearly, and
" long to love thee more! I wiſh no greater
" Pleaſure than to be found perfect in thy Love,
" and to have thee ſo dear unto me, that I can
" eaſily contemn all the gilded Vanities and Al-
" lurements of this Word at the Thoughts of
" Thee! O! that I had the Heart of the Sera-
" phim, that I might be all over Love, and feel
" my Soul affected to that Degree, which I de-
" ſire, and which thou, holy Jeſus, haſt infinitely
" deſerved of me! But if that may not be, yet
" at leaſt poſſeſs me, I pray thee, with ſuch a
" Senſe of thy Love, and with ſuch Thankful-
" neſs for all thy Favours, as is fit for me, and
" may in ſome Sort be worthy of thee: Tho'
" ſhould I offer the utmoſt Acknowledgments
" which the moſt affected and enlarged Heart
" can pay, I ſhould not give thee the thouſandth
" Part of what I owe thee. Let all the holy and
" elect Angels adore thy glorious Goodneſs, and
" let all the Sons of Men, ſo long as they have
" a Tongue to ſpeak, ſet forth thy noble Praiſe.
" For thou, O ſweeteſt Jeſu, art the Son of the
" Bleſſed, and the Joy and Glory of the World;
" thou art the Lamb of God, and the Saviour
" of Mankind, who waſt ſlain for our Sakes,
" and art alive again; and who ſitteſt now for
" ever at the right Hand of Power, in the Glory
" of the Father, that Angels may ſubmit to thee,
" and that all the World may worſhip thee, ſing
" of thee, and praiſe thy Goodneſs, Power, and
" Glory, to all Eternity.

2. We

2. We must shew ourselves *reconciled to all those who have any ways offended us*, and *that we are in Peace and Charity with all Persons.* And this we shall not think much to do, if we consider how highly our *dear Lord is concerned for them*, and how *earnestly he sues in their Behalf*; for then we shall be readily brought to it on *his* Account, tho' we might be more averse to it on *their own.* He has loved them so well as to shed his *precious Blood* for them; and can *we* find in our Hearts to *hurt* any Person, when we see him giving his own Life to *save* him? He owns them as his *Friends* and *Brethren*; and is not that enough to make us kind, to see that he is so near *a-kin* to them? He has made them Members of his *Body*, and thereby Parts of his ownself; and can we study Revenge against *them*, when *he* comes in at last to bear the Stroke, and is wretched in so doing? He becomes a *Petitioner* to us in *their Behalf*, and intreats us, by Virtue of all that he has done for us, to be Friends *again*; and can we have the Face to deny him, who has so infinitely obliged us, and ought to command us in every Thing? Shall we refuse so small a Suit to him that died for us? Or stick to throw away a sinful Resentment for his Sake, who has parted with his own Heart's Blood for ours? Tho' they are most unworthy to be pardoned, yet is he most worthy to have their Pardon; so that when he intreats for it, we must not be backward to grant it. Nay, we stand daily in a *thousand* Times more Need of *his Pardon* than they do of *ours*; so that we block up the Way to our own Forgiveness, if we refuse, at his Suit, to forgive them. For what if they have *injured* us? Have we been altogether innocent, and have offered him no Injuries? What if they have most

ungrate-

ungratefully abuſed us, after they had received the moſt endearing Kindneſſes at our Hands? Have we been duly thankful unto him, and never offended againſt all his Mercies? Do not we owe him *ten thouſand Talents?* whereas their Debt to us is but a Trifle of an *hundred Pence*, Mat. xviii. 24, 28. And ſince we are daily aſking *him* the Forgiveneſs of theſe *vaſt Sums*, can we at the ſame Time ſtick at his Inſtance to remit theſe *ſmaller Matters* to *our Neighbours?* Have we the Face to aſk Pardon, whilſt we have not the Heart to grant it? Or can we hope that Chriſt ſhould give it to us, for the moſt heinous Sins, at our Requeſt, when we deny it to our Brother, for the ſmalleſt Treſpaſſes, at his? Or rather, ſince he moſt frankly forgives us, and that too without upbraiding us, ſhall not both our own *Neceſſity*, and the *Example of his Mercy* engage us to forgive our offending Neighbours alſo?

" Lo! here, my bleſſed Saviour (will a devout " Heart then ſay) how I caſt by all angry " Thoughts, and am Friends with all the World, " as thou requireſt I ſhould be! They ſhall all be " dear to me, becauſe I ſee they are ſo to thee, " who haſt given thine own Life for their Ran- " ſom. Thou owneſt them all as thy Brethren, " and therefore they ſhall evermore be mine; for " I deſire to have the ſame Friends, and to go " along with thee in every Relation. No Mem- " ber of thine, whom I had never ſeen before, " ſhall ever be a Stranger unto me, but I will " embrace him as a Part of my own Body. Nay, " even my bittereſt Enemies ſhall have no Ha- " tred or hard Uſage at my Hands, but I am " Friends with all the World, ſince thou wilt " have me to be Friends with them. Shall not

" I,

" I, O Lord, forgive other Men, who am un-
" done myſelf, unleſs I be forgiven? Shall not I
" have pity on their Souls, as thou, bleſſed Jeſus,
" haſt on mine, and freely pardon them when
" thou becomeſt their Advocate, to ſue and in-
" tercede for them? O! my deareſt Saviour, I
" do from my Heart forgive them, and will ne-
" ver yield to return their Injuries or Unkindneſſes
" upon them. Nay, I moſt humbly beſeech
" thee, and that by thy own moſt precious Blood,
" that thou wouldeſt forgive them alſo. Give
" them Grace to repent of whatſoever they have
" done againſt thee, or againſt me, and im-
" pute not their Treſpaſſes unto them, but receive
" them, I earneſtly intreat thee, into thy Favour,
" as here I do truly and unfeignedly, into mine.
" Hear me, O bleſſed Jeſu! both for myſelf and
" them, that we may be all one with thee, and
" among ourſelves, being united to thee, by a
" Spirit of Holineſs, and to each other, by a
" Spirit of mutual Charity and brotherly Kind-
" neſs, that ſo all the World may know we are
" thy Diſciples, by that Spirit of Love which
" thou haſt given us."

3. We muſt *reſign ourſelves up to our Saviour's Uſe, and repent truly of all our Sins, promiſing him faithfully that we will amend them all from that Time.*

We muſt *reſign ourſelves up to our Saviour's Uſe,* that *he may diſpoſe of us as he pleaſes.* And what Man can ſtick at this, who conſiders that he has *bought* us, and would put us to *no Uſe* but what is *infinitely* for our *own Advantage?* Has any Perſon a better Claim to us, than he who bought us with his Blood, and gave his own Life for the Purchaſe? Should not he have the Benefit of all our Ser-

Service, who has paid so dear for it, by dying himself in our Stead? But if we were at Liberty, and he had no Power over us, is there any better Way to dispose of ourselves, or could we desire to be in other Hands rather than in his? Can we hope for more Wisdom in any one to direct, or for more Power to bring our Happiness about, than in him who knows and governs all Things? Durst we trust more to the Faithfulness and Affection of any Heart than of that which died for us? Or can we think ourselves happier in any Hands than in his, who is in all Things studious of our Advantage. For our blessed Lord seeks no other Ends by us, but our own eternal Happiness; he imposes no Duties on our Consciencies but what he has done himself before us; nay, what had we the Understanding to discern it, we should all have impos'd upon ourselves. So that in committing ourselves to his Conduct, we do not give, but seek a Benefit, and dispose of ourselves in that Way, which is incomparably our highest Interest. We are absolutely his own Right, and it is infinitely our own Interest to be wholly given up to him, and govern'd according to his Liking; and therefore every considerate Man will freely resign up his Heart to Christ, and never suffer the World, or his own Lusts, to pull it back again.

" Come then, my dear and rightful Lord, will " a poor Soul say, and take Possession of me: " Thou hast bought me with thine own Blood, a " strange Price for so despicable a Purchase! and " here I come, in all Humility, to present thee " with what thou hast so dearly got, and without " all Reserve, to give up myself unto thee. I " know, O Lord, that I am a deformed and pol- " luted Creature, most unworthy to be offered to

" ſo excellent a Majeſty. But gladly would I be
" thine, that thou may'ſt make me better, and
" ſo adorn me with thy Grace, that I may be
" fitted for thyſelf; and therefore I earneſtly be-
" ſeech thee to accept of me. I humbly beg to
" be delivered from myſelf, for I am mine own
" moſt mortal Enemy. O! that thou wouldſt
" give thine holy Spirit Power over me, and not
" let my own corrupt Will any longer govern
" me, nor my falſe Heart any more deceive me,
" nor my unbridled Paſſions any more to reign
" in me, which, alas! have tyrannized too long
" already. O! that thou wouldeſt purge my
" Underſtanding from all fooliſh Principles, and
" from all Darkneſs and Ignorance of holy
" Things; and cure my Will and Affections of
" all their Stubbornneſs, and Oppoſition to thy
" Laws; O! that thou wouldeſt firſt take them
" as thine own Propriety, and then fit them for
" their Maſter's Uſe, that I may never hereafter
" live to myſelf, but unto thy Glory! And wilt
" thou throw back a Soul, O dear Lord, that
" would hang itſelf upon thee? Wilt thou diſ-
" dain an Heart which is deſirous of thee, and
" would fain be no longer its own, but thine,
" that thou mighteſt uſe it as it may beſt ſerve
" and honour thee? O bleſſed Jeſus! do not re-
" ject it, for it is the Purchaſe of thy own moſt
" precious Blood. Let not all that be thrown
" away, which thou haſt already done for it, for
" Want of thy further Care and Conduct thereof.
" Accept me, good Lord, who here unfeignedly
" devote myſelf unto thee, that both my Soul
" and Body, and all I have, may be employed
" as thou ſeeſt fit to order me, I am nothing, I
" have nothing, and I deſire nothing but to be with
" thee, to be filled with thy Grace, and to obey

" thee

" thee perfectly; that ſo I may have nothing " of myſelf, but may do all Things thro' Chriſt " dwelling in me."

And when we thus *reſign ourſelves* up to our Saviour's Uſe, we muſt *heartily repent of all our Sins, faithfully promiſing never more to yield to them*, but to *amend them all for the Time to come.* To repent *particularly* of all our Sins, we muſt firſt *diſcover* them, by taking ſome *Catalogue of Chriſtian Duties*, and examining our own Hearts at every one, whether we have conſented to tranſgreſs them; and where we find we have done ſo, there we muſt *bemoan ourſelves*, and *fully reſolve*, that if God will be pleaſed to pardon what is *paſt*, we will never *yield* to do the like again. And what Man will not thus ſtedfaſtly reſolve to *leave* all his Sins, who has the Patience to conſider what will be the *End of his Continuance* in them? For by that, we ſhall *infinitely offend our deareſt Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*, who gave his own Life for ours, and whom therefore we are bound to pleaſe above all Perſons; we ſhall *certainly loſe all the Joys of Heaven* and *eternal Happineſs*, a Loſs which the whole World put together cannot recompence; we ſhall *unavoidably be doomed to Hell Fire* and *eternal Torments*, which is the utmoſt Height of Miſery that can poſſibly befal us. This will infallibly be the Effect of our *Perſeverance*, and *Allowance* of ourſelves in any Sins which we find ourſelves guilty of. And now let us aſk our own Souls, Whether we love them ſo well, that we will *endure all this*, rather than *forego* them? Shall I prize my Sin to that Degree, as for its Sake to act Deſpite to my deareſt Lord, who died for me? Muſt it be dearer to me than his Love, that I ſhould diſhonour and offend him whenſo-

ever it bids me? Is this the Return which I have to make to my trueſt, deareſt Friend, to ſide with his profeſſed Enemy? Is this my Thankfulneſs for all his Kindneſs, to ſtick to a Luſt which aims at nothing but my Deſtruction, rather than to him who gave his own Life to ſave mine? Thou loveſt it dearly, O my Soul; but canſt thou value it at ſuch a Rate, as to part with everlaſting Life for it? Hadſt thou rather have it, than enjoy the Face of God, and be for ever happy? Art thou content for the ſhort and unſatisfying Pleaſures which it affords, to loſe all the Joys and Glories of a bleſſed Eternity? Wilt thou die ſooner than be divorced from it? and accompany it even into the Flames of Hell, and the Midſt of eternal Torment? God forbid, will every Man ſay, whoſe Heart is thus particularly poſed thereupon, that ever I ſhould be ſo deſperately mad, and unaccountably wicked. I cannot *deſpite ſo dear a Lord*, nor *throw away the eternal Joys of the Heavenly State*, nor *endure the moſt exquiſite Smart of Hell*, and the *inſupportable Load of everlaſting Torment*. No Man can bear it, and I ſtand amazed to think of it. And therefore ſince this will be the Effect of my wicked Ways, and of my allowed Continuance therein, I am reſolved, from this Moment, to renounce them, and by the Help of God, will never return to them any more.

Thus let the *Drunkard* think with himſelf on his *Cups*, the *Swearer on his Oaths* and *Perjury*, the *unjuſt Man on his unlawful Gain*, the *Contentious on his Quarrels*, the *unclean Perſon on his Fornication* and *forbidden Pleaſures*, the *revengeful Man on his ſpiteful Carriage*, the *Slanderer* and *evil Speaker on his reproachful Words*, *Back-bitings*, and *Defamations*, and every *other Sinner* on his *particular Sins*. And when they ſeriouſly conſider that *this*

this Saviour must be lost, this Happiness of Heaven forfeited, and *this eternal Anguish* and *Extremity of Pain endured,* if they allow themselves still to go on, and persist in them; they will instantly *resolve to forsake them,* and never yield to be guilty of them again.

This may be used as a penetential Confession *of our Sins after Self-Examination.*

" O Blessed Lamb of God, who hast redeemed me with thy Blood, *will every contrite Heart then cry out,* I am utterly ashamed to look thee in the Face, considering all the cruel Usage which I have brought upon thee. * I scarce know how to think of Feasting on thy most precious Blood, now I am most earnestly invited to it, since mine own Sins have shed it. I am, alas! a most polluted Creature, who have daily offended both in Thought, Word and Deed, against thy divine Majesty. My † Pride and Contempt of God, and my sensual Lusts, and covetous Desires, and uncharitable Practices, have cried aloud to thee for Vengeance on me; and that Cry would not be silenced, unless thou, my dearest Saviour, would'st die instead of me. Of all these Offences I am guilty, and the Horror of that Guilt would fright me from thee, were it not that thou freely callest me to accept of Mercy. I come, Lord, in Obedience to thy Word, and with an humble and a penitent Heart, I earnestly intreat thee to have Pity on me. I am sensible of these, and of the other Errors of my Life; and utterly ashamed that

* *This Sentence may be omitted when this Confession is not before a Sacrament.*

† *Here mention particular Sins.*

" ever I committed them. I am weary of them,
" and fully purpoſed, by thy Grace, to become
" a new Man, or elſe I durſt not aſk to be for-
" given. My Heart ſhall never more join with
" them, nor will I ever hereafter yield to live in
" ſuch ungrateful and wicked Ways again. They
" nailed thy tender Hands and Feet! O bleſſed
" Jeſu! to the accurſed Tree, and thruſt the
" Spear into thy Side; and can I then endure to
" ſee, or any longer ſide with them? They made
" God, who is the Author of all I have and hope
" to enjoy, to become my utter Enemy; and
" ſhall I then be ſtill a Friend to them? They
" would bring me to eternal Deſtruction both of
" Body and Soul; and whilſt I conſider this, is it
" poſſible that I ſhould have any more to do with
" them? No, bleſſed Lord, I hate them, and
" am utterly reſolved, from this Time forth, for
" ever to abandon them. They have been the
" Shame of my Life, and are now the Sorrow of
" my Heart, as, alas! when thou endureſt ſuch
" Anguiſh for them on the Croſs, once they
" were of thine. I loath myſelf by Reaſon of
" them, and will never conſent any more to live
" in them; and with an humble and contrite
" Heart, I moſt humbly beſeech my heavenly
" Father, that thro' the Merits of thy Blood I
" may be forgiven. And wilt not thou, O God,
" who ſenteſt to ſeek after me whilſt I was an
" open Rebel, now meet me graciouſly, as thou
" didſt the prodigal Son, when I return again to
" my Duty? Wilt not thou, my ſweeteſt Sa-
" viour, who diedſt for me whilſt I was thine un-
" relenting Foe, now intercede for me, when I
" come to ſerve thee? O ſpeak Peace unto my
" poor Heart, and let me know and feel that
" thou forgiveſt me! Send thy holy Spirit to

" take

" take Poſſeſſion of it, to keep it true unto thy-
" ſelf, that it may never more ſtart back from
" thee. Thou haſt promiſed thy Grace to thoſe
" that aſk it, and endeavour in Expectation
" thereof. O! I deſire it, and will do what I
" can in Hopes to be thereby aſſiſted in the
" Amendment of my Miſdoings; and therefore
" I humbly hope that this Promiſe ſhall be made
" good unto thy Servant. Whatſoever thou doeſt
" in other Things, deny me not this Grace, O!
" heavenly Father, for Jeſus's Sake, who is infi-
" nitely dear to thee, and who died for me. *Amen.*"

Thus may we *diſcharge* the Duties of this Feaſt, and *excite* and *actuate* in our own Minds that *Faith* and *Thankfulneſs*, and *Charity*, and *Reſignation*, and *Repentance*, which are to render us *fit* and *worthy* of the ſame. If any are deſtitute of other Helps, they may make uſe of theſe Meditations and Prayers to affect their own Hearts, and to ſhew forth theſe Virtues of worthy Receivers. They will not always find Room for *all* theſe Devotions, whilſt the Sacrament is adminiſtring; but they may go thro' with all of them before they come, for then they may allot what Space of Time they pleaſe for them, and make uſe of ſuch of them as the Time allows when they are Receiving. And for a more actual adorning of their Souls with them at that Time, whilſt the *Miniſter* himſelf, or *others* before them are Receiving, they may expreſs them all in one *continued Devotion*, by lifting up their Hearts to God in the Words following.

" O Bleſſed Jeſu! who gaveſt thyſelf to die
" for my Sake; how near have I lain to
" thy kind Heart, when the precious Blood which
" ſtreamed thence was not ſo dear to it? I am ut-
" terly aſhamed of myſelf, that ever I ſhould put

" thee to part with such a Price, and to endure " such exceeding Smart and Tortures to befriend " me. I blush to think of it, and abhor my " Sins, which brought thee to suffer all this for " my Deliverance from them. But since my " Need required, and thy boundless Love would " make thee undergo what thou didst, in the ut- " most Thankfulness of an humble Heart, I " gladly accept the inestimable Benefit. For " which I love thee most affectionately, and will " serve thee most faithfully, and praise thee with " joyful Lips, evermore extolling thy boundless " Goodness and glorious Excellencies, and en- " deavouring that all others may do so too.

" Thou hast bought me with thy own most " precious Blood, O! merciful Lord; and here, " with an unfeigned Heart, I give up my Soul " and Body, my worldly Goods, and all that I " have, to be employed in thy Service, and dis- " posed of as thy Providence shall order me. " Take Possession of me by thy Spirit, that my " Body may always be the Temple of the Holy " Ghost; and that my Soul and all its Faculties " may be entirely devoted to thy Behoof and In- " terest; and that all my worldly Goods may be " acquired so innocently, and enjoyed so thank- " fully, and spent so temperately, and laid out " so charitably as becomes thy faithful Steward. I " will not henceforward call any Things my own, " when once my Lord has Need of them; but I " freely resign all up unto thee, since thou hast " paid so dear for me.

" I have grievously offended thee, O Father! " by many Sins, particularly " by *, &c. I am perfectly " ashamed of them, and sorry " at my Heart now that ever " I

* *Here name such Sins as you know yourselves most guilty of.*

" I committed them, and would never do ſo, " were they to be done again, and I faithfully " promiſe thee, that for the Time to come, it " ſhall be my ſincere Deſire and Care never more " willingly to yield to them; and I humbly beg, " that for Chriſt's Sake, in whom thou offereſt " Pardon to every truly penitent Heart, thou " wouldeſt forgive them.

" Thou, O Chriſt! haſt purchaſed the holy " Spirit, to help and ſtrengthen all thoſe who are " ready to labour in an holy Life, and to join " their own beſt Endeavours to his divine Aſſiſt- " ances; and doſt moſt graciouſly offer him to " all ſuch induſtrious Souls in this Holy Sacra- " ment. Lord, I do ſincerely deſire to amend " all theſe Sins, which I have here with Sorrow " and Shame acknowledged before thee. I am " fully bent upon the Amendment thereof, and " by thy Help will endeavour what I can to- " wards it, and do humbly depend upon thy " Grace and Aid to carry me thro' therewith. Oh! " be it unto thy Servant according to thy Word.

" I am at Peace, O Lord, with all Perſons, " and forgive all thoſe who have offended againſt " me, even as I expect Forgiveneſs of my own " Offences at thy Hands; and am fully reſolved, " by thy Grace, to be kind to all the World, " but eſpecially to all the Members of thy myſti- " cal Body, for thy Sake, that by theſe Returns of " Charity I may in ſome Sort anſwer that infinite " Love and Kindneſs which I receive from thee,

" Thy Blood, O bleſſed Jeſus! has procured; " and thou, holy Father, for Chriſt's Sake, haſt " promiſed Pardon of Sins to all thoſe who truly " repent of them; and the Aſſiſtance of thy " Holy Spirit, to every one who is ſincerely " ready to uſe his Help and Endeavour there-

" with,

" with, and eternal Life to all ſuch as are en-
" tirely obedient to thy holy Laws. And to
" ſhew that thou art ſtill of the ſame Mind, and
" wilt make all this good, thou graciouſly calleſt
" and earneſtly inviteſt us to receive Aſſurances
" thereof in this Holy Sacrament, Lord, I
" heartily repent me of all my Sins, for Chriſt's
" Sake do thou pardon me. I am fully reſolved
" to ſhew Care, and to labour in the Amend-
" ment of all mine Offences, let thy Grace and
" holy Spirit come in to aſſiſt and enable me.
" I am ſtedfaſtly purpoſed to keep thy Holy
" Commandments, do thou O! then graciouſly
" accept me for the Sake of my crucified Sa-
" viour, whoſe Death I now moſt thankfully
" commemorate, and who is here offered unto
" thee as our Atonement, on his Table."

Or ſhorter, Thus;

" O Bleſſed Jeſus, who diedſt for my Sake,
" and daily ſtill reneweſt thy Kindneſs, by
" ſhewing thyſelf well pleaſed with what thou
" haſt done, and calling me to meet thee in this
" joyful Commemoration of it: I come at thy
" Command, to ſhew myſelf humbly and thank-
" fully mindful of ſo infinite a Benefit. Bleſſed,
" yea for ever bleſſed be thy Love, which made
" thee think upon me when I lay in Miſery; nay,
" forget thyſelf, and throw away thine own Life
" to ſave mine. I humbly adore thy marvellous
" Goodneſs, which ſhall ever be the Joy and
" Praiſe, the Wonder and Aſtoniſhment of Men
" and Angels. And, O! that I may always
" love thee better than I do my Life, that ſo I
" may not flinch even to die for thee, as thou

" haſt

" haſt done for me, if ever thou ſhalt call me to it
" for thy Glory! I ſee, in this Bread that is
" broken, and in this Wine which is poured out,
" what cruel Pains my Sins brought to my deareſt
" Lord, * and how they ſtand
" guilty of his Body and Blood.
" I come with Shame and a
" troubled Heart to confeſs it; I utterly abhor
" them for what they have done, and declare,
" ſince they have proved thy cruel Enemies, that
" they ſhall evermore be mine, and that I will
" never, from this Day, admit of a Reconcilia-
" tion with them. I am here to aſſure thee, O
" dear Saviour, that I will not live unto myſelf
" or them, but unto thee, and freely devote all
" I have to thy Uſe, ſince thou haſt bought and
" paid ſo dear for me. I love all Men, and will
" embrace them as my Brethren, becauſe they
" are thine; and I do freely forgive all the
" World, even as I deſire to be forgiven. O
" holy Jeſus, according to thy boundleſs Mercy,
" accept of theſe ſmall Returns of thy poor Ser-
" vant, which tho' very mean, alas! are yet the
" beſt I have to offer thee; and ſupply me, I
" humbly intreat thee, with a more abundant
" Meaſure of thy Grace, that I may be able to
" pay back ſomething which is more worthy of
" thee. Let this Holy Sacrament, O Chriſt! be
" the Comfort and Refreſhment of my Heart,
" conveying thy Pardon and Peace to it, and the
" enriching and eſtabliſhing of my Spirit with all
" the Benefits of thy Blood. Make it a great In-
" creaſe of preſent Grace to me, and a certain
" Pledge of Immortality, to aſſure me that I
" ſhall ever live with thee, and be near to that
" kind Heart which died for me. Be it even ſo
" for thine own Sake, bleſſed Jeſu! *Amen.*"

* *Here name Particulars.*

In

In theſe, or ſuch like Words, may we act over all thoſe Virtues which are to render us worthy Communicants, before the Holy Myſteries are brought to us. And at the Receipt of them, we may lift up our Hearts to God in theſe, or the like Expreſſions.

After the *Receiving of the Bread*, we may ſay to our deareſt Lord, with an affectionate Heart:

" I Receive this, O my Lord! in Remem-
" brance of thy bloody Death and Paſſion,
" and thank thee moſt intirely for laying down
" thine own Life for me. O! how do I rejoice
" in thy marvellous Love, and in this Remem-
" brance of it! I will always live to thee, O
" ſweeteſt Saviour, and do here utterly renounce
" every Sin whereby I have moſt ungratefully
" pierced thy bleeding Heart, and am Friends
" with all the World for thy Sake; and I will ex-
" tol thy matchleſs Bounty whilſt I have a Tongue
" to ſpeak, giving all Honour, Glory, and Praiſe
" to thee, the Lamb of God, who waſt ſlain, and
" now ſitteſt upon the Throne for evermore."

And in like Manner after the *Receiving of the Cup:*

" THE Remembrance of thy Blood-ſhed-
" ding, O ſweeteſt Saviour! is dear to
" me; I can never forget it, ſince it was ſpilt for
" my Sake, and I owe my very Life to it. In
" all the Affection of an infinitely obliged Heart,
" I humbly thank thee for what thou haſt done
" and ſuffer'd for us, and gladly conſent to thoſe
" Terms of Life and Mercy which were pur-
" chaſed for us thereby; and, by thy Grace, I
" will never wilfully yield henceforward to do
" any Thing that is unworthy of ſo great and in-
" eſtimable a Benefit; O bleſſed Jeſu! I adore

" thy

" thy Love, and will ever love thee above all " Things, and love and embrace all my Brethren " with open Arms for thy Sake, yea, and love " my Enemies too, ſince thou requireſt I ſhould " do ſo. And my Heart's Deſire is, after this " Sort, to fulfil thy Will in all Things, and moſt " devoutly to adore thy glorious Goodneſs, and to " ſhew forth thy boundleſs Praiſe to my Life's End.

" O! keep me unalterable in this Mind, *may* " *a devout Soul then go on*, and never ſuffer my " own corrupt Luſts to turn me from it. I have " now, O holy Saviour! taken thee into my " Heart. O let thy Preſence baniſh them away, " that they may never pretend to it again, ſince " now it is holy to the Lord, nor ever appear to " pollute that Place wherein ſo divine a Gueſt is " lodged. Now thou art pleaſed to enter under " my Roof, have me always in thy Keeping, for " I am ſafe in no other Hands. Preſerve the " Place which thou haſt taken Poſſeſſion of, and " let not thy Enemies and mine any more invade it. " Pour into my Heart all the Benefits of thy cruci- " fied Body and Blood, ſince now, by thy wonder- " ful Grace, I am made Partaker of them. Thy " Blood was ſhed for the Remiſſion of Sins: O " let me know and feel that mine are all for- " given! It obtained the Aſſiſtance of thy holy " Spirit and Grace; O! let me ever enjoy that " as I ſtand in Need of it. It was the Price " which thou paid'ſt down for eternal Life. O! " let that finally be my Lot, ſince thou haſt paid " ſo dear for it. Bid me hope aſſuredly, O " bleſſed Jeſu! that all this ſhall be made good " unto thy Servant, becauſe now thou haſt given " thyſelf to me, and fed me with thine own " Body, whereby mayeſt thou ever dwell in me, " and I in thee. *Amen.*"

And

And when this is done, whilſt others are Receiving, we may employ ourſelves in ſome of the *foregoing Devotions*; or, when we have enough of them, join heartily in the *Prayer* which is made at the Delivery of the Bread and Wine to *others*; or ſtrike in affectionately with the *Pſalm of Praiſe*, which, for the Eaſe and Exerciſe of all, but of thoſe particularly who have already received, is wont at that Time to be ſung in many Places.

After this Sort then may we lift up our Hearts to God, and diſcharge all thoſe Duties which are required in every worthy Communicant. When we have no other Helps, we may acceptably expreſs them all in a devout Concurrence with the *Church's Prayers*; ſince in them, as I have ſhewn, Part I. Chap. 3. there is an actual Exerciſe of all theſe Duties. But when we can do more, either by the Help of *Books*, or of our own *Invention*; we may act them over ſtill more fully in *theſe*, or ſuch *like* Forms of Devotion.

And when all this is done, and this ſolemn Feaſt is concluded, we muſt not think the Work of *worthy Receiving* is at an End. For *one* Thing ſtill remains, which muſt employ us always afterwards, and that is *a careful Performance of all thoſe Promiſes which we made to God in this holy Ordinance.*

In the Bleſſed Sacrament, as has been ſhewn, we ſeek not only a Pardon for what is *paſt*, but alſo vow and promiſe Amendment for the *future.* And theſe Promiſes muſt be made good afterwards, and it muſt be our Care whilſt we live to fulfil them.

This we are *highly concerned to do*, and it will greatly increaſe our Guilt and Condemnation if we fall ſhort of it. For if we return to our former Sins again, after we have thus ſolemnly vowed

vowed to forſake them, we are falſe to our Word, and treacherous where we ſeem to be moſt ſincere, and ſeek more eſpecially to be truſted. We break our Faith with God, and go about to delude his Expectation, had he been capable to be impoſed upon, and believed as we would have had him; which is as great an Abuſe as we can well put upon him. And this *doubles* the Sin which we commit, and ſets God farther off from being intreated; for now we have not only the *Offence itſelf* to anſwer for, but alſo this *Perfidiouſneſs* and *Breach of Vows*, which adds a new one to it, and makes it greater. So that after every Sacrament, if we ſtill continue impenitent, our Guilt is aggravated, and our Souls more endanger'd, and we are greater Sinners than we were before

Thus highly are we concerned to perform the Promiſes which we made at the Table of our Lord.

And this we ſhall be *very like to do*, if we *think often of them every Day*, for ſome Time eſpecially *after we are gone from it*. Indeed, if we forget all we did, and all the Vows which we made there to Almighty God; we are like to be the ſame Men ſtill, and muſt not expect that it ſhould amend us. For the Sacrament, as I have ſhewn, doth not better us without our own Care, but by helping and ingaging us to good Endeavours after it is over. It works not as a *natural*, but as a *moral* Means, and improves none but ſuch as remember what they did thereat, and labour after their own Improvements. So that if we think all our Work was done at Church, and fall into a careleſs and ſecure State of Mind when we get home again; we ſhall be held ſtill in the ſame Sins, and the Matter is not like to be much mended with us by ſuch Receiving. But if after-

afterwards we frequently remember what we promiſed there; if we ſet our own Vows every Day before our Eyes, and call to Mind our own Ingagements; that Remembrance will give them Force and make them have their Effect upon us. For the Thought of our having *promiſed* and *ſolemnly undertook* for any Duties, is the readieſt Way to have them all *performed.*

To reap that Benefit then which God deſigned, and which we expect by it; we muſt dwell much in our own Thoughts upon what paſſed there, after the Feaſt is ended. We muſt maintain that Acquaintance with our bleſſed Lord which then we began, and look upon it not as a *tranſient Act*, but as an *Entrance on a laſting State*, which ever after we are to continue in. We muſt bethink ourſelves daily, that when laſt we were with our Saviour, we cut out Work for our whole Lives, and in that Hour made many Promiſes, which thro' all the Remainder of our Days are moſt religiouſly to be performed by us. This Courſe will render it an Ordinance full of Grace and heavenly Benefits, which will ſet us on mightily in our virtuous Attainments. And when we reap this Profit by it, it will cure all our Indifferency and Averſion to it, and make us run to it the next Time with Edge of Appetite, as we would to a moſt delicious and enlivening Entertainment. We ſhall no more account it a fruitleſs Work, when once we have taſted theſe ſweet and wholeſome Effects of it; but deſire to ſhare in it oftener, as it can be had, and bleſs the Time that ever we came thereto.

HEADS

HEADS
OF
SELF-EXAMINATION,
FOR

The *Use* of *those* who would find out what Sins they have to *repent* of, either *before* a *Sacrament*, or at any *other* Times.

The Particulars of Duty *towards* God *and* Men, *as they are briefly summed up in the* Church-Catechism.

MY *Duty* towards *God* is, to *believe in him*, i. e. to believe the holy Scriptures, which are his Word, taking all the Laws of Humility, Charity, *&c.* there recited, for his Laws; and the Promises of Pardon and Happiness to the Penitent, *&c.* and the Threatnings of eternal Death to all impenitent Sinners, *&c.* for his Promises and Threatnings, which he will see fulfilled upon us: To *fear him*, as every Man doth, who dare not do any evil Thing which he sees is offensive to him: To *love him with all my Heart*, &c. as those Persons do, who for his Sake do every Thing which he bids them: To *worship him*, to *give him Thanks*, to *put my whole Trust in him*, i. e. both in his Providence, for outward Supplies, as I need them; in his Mercy, for Pardon of Sins, when I repent of them; and in his Spirit, for Grace and inward Aid, when I endeavour together with him: To *call upon him*,

to *honour his holy Name and his Word*, and to *serve him truly all the Days of my Life.*

My *Duty* towards my *Neighbour* is, to *love him as myself*, or to *do to all Men as I would have them do to me:* To *love*, *honour*, *and*, when Need is, *succour my Father and Mother:* To *honour and obey the King*, and *all that are put in Authority under him:* To *submit myself to all my spiritual Pastors*, and *all my Governors:* To *shew Reverence to all my Betters:* To *bear no Malice or Hatred in my Heart:* To *hurt no Body by Word or Deed:* To *be true and just in all my Dealings:* To *keep my Hands from picking and stealing, and my Tongue from Evil-speaking, Lying and Slandering:* To *keep my Body in Temperance, Soberness, and Chastity:* Not to *covet other Mens Goods:* To *be diligent in my own Calling, and do my Duty in that Relation, State, or Way of Life unto which it has pleased God to call me.*

A particular Enumeration of Sins, whether against God, *our* Neighbour, *or* Ourselves; *taken out of the* Measures of Christian Obedience, *which are all there explained in the second Book.*

SINS against *ourselves*, are *Pride*, *i. e.* too high a Conceit of ourselves, and Contempt of others; *Arrogance*, *i. e.* assuming too much to ourselves, in setting off our own Praise; *Vain-glory*, *i. e.* intemperate Affectation of the Praise of others; *Ambition*, *i. e.* a restless Pursuit of Honour and great Places; *Haughtiness*, in contemptous, scornful Carriage; *Imperiousness*, *i. e.* a lordly Way of Behaviour, in commanding Men no Way subject to us; *Worldliness*, *i. e.* an over-eager Care of worldly Things; *Gluttony*, *Voluptuousness*, *Drunkenness*, *Revelling*, *Incontinence*, *Lasciviousness*, *filthy* or *obscene Jestings*, *Uncleanness*, *Sodomy*,

Sodomy, *Effeminateneſs*, *Adultery*, *Fornication*, *Inceſt*, *Rape*, *Covetouſneſs*, *i. e.* Unſatisfiedneſs with our own, and an impatient Deſire of more, or of what belongs to others; *Refuſing the Croſs*, *i. e.* deſerting a Duty to avoid it; *Idleneſs*, *Senſuality*, *i. e.* an induſtrious Care to gratify our bodily Senſes; *Carnality*, *i. e.* Subjection to our fleſhly Luſts and Appetites.

Sins againſt *God*, are, *Atheiſm*, *denying Providence*, *Blaſphemy*, *Superſtition*, *Idolatry*, *Witchcraft*, *Fooliſhneſs* or groſs Ignorance of our Duty, *Unbelief*, *hating God*, *Want of Zeal*, *diſtruſting him*, *not praying to him*, *Unthankfulneſs*, *Diſcontent in our preſent Condition* or *repining at his Ordering*, *Fearleſneſs* or venturing on any Thing, tho' we know it will offend him; *Common Swearing*, *Perjury*, *Prophaneneſs*, *Diſobedience*.

Sins againſt *our Brethren at large*, where are Sins of

Injuſtice, as, *Murder*, *Falſe-witneſs*, *Slander*, *i. e.* defaming them with falſe Things, *Lying*, *Unfaithfulneſs*, or Breach of Promiſe; *Theft*, *Oppreſſion*, *i. e.* wronging one who cannot cope with us in Contention; *Extortion*, or *depreſſing* in *Bargaining*, *Circumvention*, or going beyond our Brethren.

Uncharitableneſs, as *Wickedneſs*, *i. e.* a Delight in doing Miſchief, and making others Work: *Deſpiſing* and *hating them that are good*, *giving Scandal to weak Brethren*, *i.e.* laying in their Way an Occaſion of Sin; *Envy*, *rejoycing in Evil*, *Uncharitableneſs in Alms*; *ſuffering falſe Stains to ſtick upon them*, when it is in our Power to vindicate them; *Evil-ſpeaking*, or divulging any Ill we hear or know by them; *Cenſorioufneſs*, *i. e.* a Proneneſs to blame or condemn them; *Back-biting*, *Whiſpering*, *Railing*, *Upbraiding* them with our Kindneſſes, *Reproaching* them with their own Faults, *Mocking* them for

their Infirmities, *Difficulty of Acceſs*, *Affronting* them, *Uncourteouſneſs*, *Uncondeſcention*, *Unhoſpitableneſs* towards Strangers, *Surlineſs*, *Malignity*, or putting the worſt Senſe on what is ſaid or done by others; *Unquietneſs*, *Unthankfulneſs*, *Anger*, *Variance*, *Bitterneſs*, *Clamour*, *Hatred* and *Malice*, *Implacableneſs* or Difficulty in being appeaſed after any Offences; *Revenge*, or returning Ill for Ill; *Curſing Enemies*, *Haſtineſs* and *Rigour* in exacting Puniſhments.

Diſcord; as, *Unpeaceableneſs*, *Emulation* or provoking one another; *Pragmaticalneſs* or being *Buſy-Bodies*; *Tale-bearing*, *not Satisfying for Injuries*, *Contentiouſneſs*, *Diviſion* and *Faction*, *Hereſy*, *Schiſm*, *Tumult*.

Sins againſt our *Brethren* in *particular Relations*.

Sins againſt *ſovereign Princes*; as, *Diſhonour*, *Irreverence*, *Speaking Evil of Dignities*, *refuſing Tribute* and *Taxes*, *Traitorouſneſs*, *neglecting to pray for Kings*, *Diſobedience* to them, *Reſiſtance* and *Rebellion*.

Sins againſt *Biſhops* and *Miniſters*; as, *Diſhonour* of them, eſpecially for their *Works* Sake; *Irreverence*, *not providing for them*; *Sacrilege*, or taking away, either by Force or Fraud, thoſe juſt Dues which are given to God for their Support; *Not praying for them*, *Diſobedience*.

Sins of *married Perſons*; as, *Unconcernedneſs in each others Condition*, *not bearing each other's Infirmities*, *provoking each other*, *Eſtrangedneſs*, *publiſhing each others Faults*, *not praying for each other*, *Jealouſy*. Of the *Huſband* againſt the *Wife*; as, *not maintaining her* with convenient Supplies, *not protecting her* from outward Annoyances, *Imperiouſneſs*, or a harſh and magiſterial Exerciſe of Commands; *Uncompliance* with her reaſonable Deſires, and *Uncondeſcention* to her pitiable Weakneſſes. Of the *Wife* againſt the *Huſband*; as,

Diſ-

Diſhonour in inward Eſteem and Opinions, *Irreverence* in outward Carriage, *Unobſervance* in not forecaſting to do what may pleaſe him, *Diſobedience* to his juſt Commands, *caſting off his Yoke*, *or* Unſubjection.

Sins of *Parents* and *Children*; as, *Want of natural Affection*, *not praying for each other*, *Imprecation.* Of the *Parents* againſt the *Children*; as, *not providing for them*, *irreligious and evil Education*, *provoking them to Anger* by imperious Harſhneſs or needleſs Severity in Governing. Of the *Children* againſt the *Parents*; as, *Diſhonour* in their Minds, *Irreverence* in their Behaviour, *being aſhamed* of them, *mocking* them, *ſpeaking Evil* of them, *ſtealing* from them, *Diſobedience* to their lawful Commands, *Contumacy*, or *caſting off Subjection* to them.

Sins of *Brothers* and *Siſters*; as, *Want of natural Affection*, *not providing for our Brethren*, *not praying for them*, *praying againſt them.*

Sins of *Maſters* againſt their *Servants*; as, *not maintaining* them, *not catechiſing* or *inſtructing* them, *unequal Government* or *Injuſtice* ſhewn in requiring unlawful, *Wantonneſs* in requiring ſuperfluous, and *Rigour* in requiring unmerciful Things of them; *immoderate Threatning*, *Imperiouſneſs*, or contemptuous haughty Treating of them: *defrauding*, or *keeping back the Wages of the Hireling.* Of *Servants* againſt their *Maſters*, as *Diſhonour*, *Irreverence*, *publiſhing* or *aggravating their Maſter's Faults*, *not clearing*, when they can, his *injured Reputation*, *Unfaithfulneſs* in what he intruſts with them, ſhewn either by their *Waſtefulneſs*, *i. e.* ſpending it for their Pleaſure, or *Purloining*, *i. e.* diverting it to their own Profit and ſecret Enrichment; *Diſobedience*, *Non-obſervance*, *anſwering again*, *Slothfulneſs*, *Eye-ſervice*, *Reſiſtance*, *not praying for him*, *praying againſt him.*

To all which, add two other Sins, which are peculiarly ſo among Chriſtians, *viz.* the *Neglect of Baptiſm*, and *abſenting from the Lord's Supper*.

When we are deſirous to diſcover all our Sins, that we may truly repent of them, we may examine our own Hearts in all theſe Particulars, trying ourſelves either by the *former* Catalogue when we have leſs, or by this *latter*, when we have more Time, according to our own Diſcretion. We may aſk ourſelves at every one, Whether we ever *wittingly yielded* to it? and if we have, Whether ſince that Time we have *amended* it? And noting all thoſe whereof we ſtand guilty before God, affect our own Hearts with a ſorrowful Senſe of what we have done, from ſuch Conſiderations as are before laid down; and then renew our Vows, and make God our humble Confeſſion and Engagements that we will never have more to do with them. For which End, they who are not otherways ſupplied, may make uſe of the *Devotion*, p. 325, which may ſerve as a *penitential Prayer* and *Confeſſion*.

A Prayer before the Sacrament.

O *Father of Mercies, who haſt once given thy Son to die for me, and art now ready, in the Holy Sacrament, to offer him to me again, I humbly adore, but am utterly at a Loſs when I would duly prize ſo invaluable a Mercy. What am I, poor wretched Creature, that I ſhould ſit down to eat with my bleſſed Lord, when the glorious Angels do at a Diſtance adore and pay him Homage? Why ſhould I be called to feed upon his ſacred Body and Blood, when my Sins had a Hand in all the Miſeries which he ſuffered, ſo that I deſerve to be ranked among his Murderers, who were guilty of that horrid Fact, which nothing, but the Blood they ſhed, could ever,*

ever expiate? But since it is thy glorious Excellency, O blessed Jesu! to love those that hate thee, and to save their Lives who barbarously took away thine, and accordingly to call to this heavenly Feast so unworthy a Wretch as I am; I am ready to come at thy Command, but would fain come worthily, and leave all my Sins behind me, seeing it is no Feast for them. O! I loath them, and would never yield to commit them, were they to do again; and humbly intreat my Heavenly Father, that for thy Sake he would freely forgive me what is past, and rid me of them for the Time to come. Slay them, good Lord, for they have slain thee, and will slay me too, in Time, if they are suffered to reign in me. Meet me in this heavenly Banquet, with a full Pardon of all mine Offences, and with a perfect Cure of all mine Infirmities and spiritual Distempers, that I may be cleansed by thy Blood, and quickened by thy Spirit, and assured of that eternal Life, which, for thy Sake, God has promised to all his elect ones.

All this thou art ready to do for me, O holy Jesu! if I come worthily. And therefore my humble Request is, That thou wouldst assist me acceptably to perform the Duties of this heavenly Feast, that so I may enjoy all the Blessings of it, and feel it a Communion of thy very Body and Blood. I would gladly remember thy dying Love with the most devout Affections, and with an Heart that is full of Thanks, and intirely devoted to thy Service, and is quite weary of my Sins, and most desirous of thy Grace, and is thoroughly prepared to seal a lasting Covenant of Repentance and Reconciliation with thee, and with all my Neighbours? All this I desire to do, and to do it fervently: But alas! I cannot do it as I ought, unless thou, O blessed Saviour! wilt graciously come and help me. My Apprehensions of this amazing Love are very low, O! do thou exalt them. My Heart is still insensible of what thou hast done and suffer'd

for me, and my Affections are dull and heavy, O! do thou quicken and inflame them. Make me love thee as much as it is poſſible for my Heart to love any, and to deſire thy Grace as highly as I need it; and to be ſet againſt every Sin as irreconcilably as there is juſt Cauſe for the ſame, both for thy Sake and for mine own; and to love all my Brethren as I am beloved, that I may be fit to receive the abundant Communications of thy Grace in the approaching Sacrament? I earneſtly aſk, and humbly hope for all this, O good God! only becauſe I infinitely need it; and becauſe thy Grace is infinite, which will not ſuffer thee to ſee the Neceſſities of thy poor Servant unſupplied; and becauſe, unworthy as I am, I am ſtill the Purchaſe of thy Son's moſt precious Blood. O! then do not deſpiſe me for thine own Mercies, and for thy dear Son's Sake: In whoſe holy Name and Words I farther pray as he hath taught me.

Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.

A PRAYER and THANKSGIVING after the SACRAMENT.

I Thank Thee moſt intirely, O my God! for calling me this Day to thy Own Table, to ſhew me how thine only Son freely died in my Stead, and to aſſure me that now, for his Sake, thou art fully reconciled, and wilt live in me by thy Grace now at preſent, and raiſe me up to be eternally happy with thyſelf at laſt; of all which thou haſt given me the ſureſt Pledges in his moſt precious Body and Blood. What can I render unto thee, holy Father, or to thee, my dearſt Saviour, for ſo incomprehenſible a Benefit? I admire thy marvellous Love, and magnify it above all Things. Thy Praiſe ſhall ever be in my Mouth, and I will tell out thy wondrous Works with Gladneſs. And may all Hearts adore, and every Tongue confeſs, that thou, holy Jeſus, art the Saviour of the World, and

and the Son of the Father, whom Heaven and Earth must honour, and call blessed for evermore.

*Pardon, O good God! the Unaffectedness of my dull Heart, in the Receipt of so inestimable a Treasure. And fill me with Desires some Way suitable to my Needs, and to the Richness of thy Mercies, that whensoever this Cup of Blessings shall again overflow, my Heart may run over with Joy and Thankfulness also. Let me never forget the Love which I have received, and the Peace which I have sealed, and the Promises of new Life, which I have made this Day; but as thy Grace has help'd me to them, so keep me in a lively Sense of them, and inable me always to fulfil the same to my Life's End. Now thou hast given me the Blood of Expiation, to shew me that we are Friends; O! never let me be guilty of any Thing to break the Peace, which is now so solemnly ratified betwixt us. Now I have vowed Obedience to thy holy Laws, to be humble, chast, temperate, just, charitable, patient, devout *, and entirely resigned to thy holy Will and Pleasure; O! let me not start back again from these holy Promises for ever! Now I have received my blessed Lord, never suffer me to do any Thing unworthy of him; now I am Partaker of his Body and Blood, let his holy Spirit go along with them, and then I shall be what I ought to be when I am in his Keeping. My Sins, which I have renounced, will return again, except he chase them away; and my false Heart, which now seems fix'd for God, will revolt, unless he establish it. O! sweetest Saviour, let thy Body be my Food, thy Strength my Guard, thy Spirit my Life, and the Sense of thy Favour my greatest Joy and Comfort. Go on graciously to accomplish what thou hast now begun in me, and let me ever be secure and happy in thy Custody. Be it even so, for thine own Sake, blessed Jesu!*

* Here mention Virtues *particularly* vowed at the Lord's Table.

And

And then, when there is Time for it, or afterwards, where there is not, may they go on, and say;

Give thy Grace, O holy Jesu! to all the World, and let all who were redeemed by thy Blood, acknowledge thee to be the Lord, and become thy Worshippers and faithful Servants. Make all Christians conscientious Practisers of that Holiness which they profess. And above all, inspire them with uniting Principles and charitable Hearts, that by their loving one another, as thou hast loved us, all the World may know that they are thy Disciples. Let all Governors rule with Wisdom and Justice, and all Subjects obey with Love and Chearfulness. Let the Priests of the Lord be exemplary in their Lives, and discreet and diligent in their Labours, having a most compassionate Love for Souls; and let the People be humble and towardly, most desirous to hearken to, and fully bent to follow wise Instructions. Be an Help at Hand to all that need and are afflicted. Send Supplies to all that are in Want, and assist them contentedly to depend upon thee. Raise Friends to the Widow and Fatherless, the Prisoners and Captives, and to all that groan under Oppressors, who are thrown upon thy Mercy. Give Repentance, Patience, and Resignation to all who are sick, and Ease when thou seest it convenient for them. Be a Comforter to all troubled Consciencies, helping them to an acceptable Holiness, and enlightening their Minds about all causeless Scruples, that they may not fear where no Fear is. Succour all that are tempted, with such a Measure of thy Grace, as may inable them to stand in all their Trials. Think particularly on all my Friends, who are especially endeared to me by their Kindnesses or Acquaintance; on all my Relations in the Flesh; on all who pray particularly for me, or desire my Prayers. Teach us all to desire what thou approvest, and then grant us whatsoever is desired. Prevent us in all our Actions, and guard us against all Dangers, and relieve us in

all Streights, and grant that we may always make thee our Stay and Confidence, and take all Things well which thou ordereſt for us. Shorten all our Sorrows, and prevent all our Sins, and fit us all for that eternal Kingdom which thou haſt prepared for us, for Jeſus's Sake, in whoſe holy Name and Words I further pray unto thee.

Our Father which art in Heaven, *&c.*

Being ſenſible how plain Minds, who are ready to do it ſo far as they are inabled, are often-times at a Loſs for their *daily Devotions*; and not knowing but this Treatiſe may fall into ſome ſuch Hands; I have added *two* Prayers, which ſuch Perſons may ſay *Morning* and *Evening* in their Families.

A Morning Prayer for a Family.

O *God, who art the Giver of all good Gifts, and the Father of Mercies, we thine unworthy Servants intirely deſire to praiſe thy Name for all the Expreſſions of thy Bounty towards us. Bleſſed be thy Love, that gave thy Son to die for our Sins, to put us in a Way of being happy, if we would obey thee; and after all our wilful Refuſals of thy Grace, ſtill haſt Patience with us, and haſt added this one Day more to all we have miſpent already, to ſee if we will finiſh the Work which thou haſt ſet us to do, and fit ourſelves for eternal Glory. Pardon, good Lord, all our former Sins, and all our Abuſes of thy Forbearance, for which now we are ſorry at our Hearts; and give us Grace to lead more holy Lives, and to be more careful in improveing all future Opportunities. Make thyſelf preſent to our Minds, and let thy Love and Fear rule in our Souls in all thoſe Places and Companies where our Occaſions ſhall lead us this Day. Keep us chaſte in all our Thoughts, tem-*

temperate in all our Enjoyments, and humble in all our Opinions of ourſelves, charitable in all our Speeches of others, meek and peaceable under all Provocations, ſincere and faithful in all our Profeſſions, and ſo juſt and upright in all our Dealings, that no Neceſſity may force, nor Opportunity in any Kind allure us to defraud or go beyond our Neighbours. When thou beſtoweſt Good on others, let us not envy, but rejoice in it; and when thou addeſt any to ourſelves, let us own thy Mercy and humbly thank thee for it. Afford us convenient Supplies in all our reaſonable Neceſſities, and protect us againſt the Approach of all Dangers. Make us diligent in all our Buſineſs, and give ſuch Succeſs to our honeſt Endeavours as thou ſeeſt moſt expedient for us; and teach us contentedly to ſubmit, and not to repine at any Thing that happens to us by the Allotment of thy wiſe Providence. In all our Paſſage thro' this World, and our manifold Concerns therein, ſuffer not our Hearts to be too much ſet upon it; but always fix our Eyes upon the bleſſed Hope, that as we go along we may make all the Things of this World to miniſter to it, and be careful above all Things to fit our Souls for that pure and perfect Bliſs which thou haſt prepared for all who love and fear thee, in the Glories of thy Kingdom.

Extend thy Grace, we farther beſeech thee, to all Men, in all Places; eſpecially to the Governors and Subjects, to all both high and low, rich and poor, who pray for it, or need it in theſe Kingdoms. Bleſs all our Relations, who are near us in the Fleſh, and all our Friends and Benefactors, who are endeared to us by their Kindneſſes. Forgive all our Enemies, give them Hearts to fear thee, and to be kind to us; and ſupply all us, and all others with whatſoever thou ſeeſt proper for us, for Jeſus Chriſt's Sake; in whoſe bleſſed Name and Words we ſtill recommend ourſelves unto thee, ſaying,

Our Father which art in Heaven, *&c.*

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An Evening Prayer for a Family:

O Moſt gracious God, who daily multiplieſt upon us thy Mercies, notwithſtanding we every Day renew our Provocations; accept, we beſeech thee, of our moſt humble and hearty Thanks for thy unſpeakable Kindneſs towards us. Bleſſed be thy Goodneſs, which has this Day ſupplied us with Food and Neceſſaries; and haſt preſerved us in Health, the chiefeſt of all outward Enjoyments; and haſt proſper'd the Work of our Hands, and lent us our Friends to be ſtill a Support and Comfort to us. Adored be thy Love and Patience, which haſt allowed us one Day more to amend our Ways, and aſſiſt us by the Suggeſtions of thy Spirit, and thy gracious Providences, to make up that Reſignation, Humility, Contentedneſs, Chaſtity, Sobriety, Meekneſs, Charity, and other Virtues which are yet wanting in our own Souls. We deſire to ſhew ourſelves duly ſenſible of theſe endearing Benefits, by learning to depend upon thy Providence, which has been ſo watchful over us; and to be contented with thy Orderings, which are ſo wiſely fitted to our own Advantage; and applying all Opportunities to the Encreaſe of that Righteouſneſs and holy Living which thou requireſt at our Hands. We fain would do it, and are here ſincerely reſolved to endeavour it; and thou haſt promiſed to aid all thoſe who labour in ſo good a Work. Be it then, O Lord, unto thy Servants according to thy Word, and enable us by thy Grace and holy Spirit ſo to do.

We are ſenſible, O God, how highly we have offended thee, altho' we ſtand thus indebted for all we have, or hope to enjoy, to thy free Grace and Bounty. How many Ways have we diſhonoured our Profeſſion, and revolted from the Vows which we made in Baptiſm,

tism, by Pride, and Envy, and Anger, and Discontent, and Evil-speaking, and serving divers Lusts, which then we utterly renounced, and promised never to live in again? We are heartily grieved and ashamed for these, and all other our Mis-doings, and are fully resolved, by thy Grace, hereafter to amend them. We unfeignedly repent of them, and for Christ's Sake, humbly beg to be forgiven, and that thy Grace and holy Spirit may rid us of them for the Time to come. Our full Purpose is to endeavour after a thorough Amendment of our Ways, and thy Promise is to help us therein; O let thine Arm be our Almighty Aid, and then we shall return to them no more.

Keep us under the Defence and Care of thy good Providence this Night; make our Sleep safe, and refreshing to us. Fit us for our great Change, that it may not surprize us unawares, but that having led holy Lives, we may be happy in our Deaths, and have Comfort and well grounded Hope in thee.

Give all Men Grace to repent of all their Sins, and to become thy faithful Servants. Let all Christians live up to the Laws of that Religion which they profess; especially bless these Kingdoms wherein we live: Let our Governors rule with Justice, and our People obey with Chearfulness: Make the Rich and Prosperous to shew themselves temperate in using, and charitable in distributing of their Substance; and the Poor and Afflicted to be patient and contented under their Burthens: And cause us all to love as Brethren, and to be pitiful and tender-hearted towards all Men. Preserve our Friends in their Souls and Bodies: Forgive our Enemies, and make them kindly affected towards us: And do whatsoever thou seest fitting for us all, for the Sake of thy Son, our Advocate, and only Saviour Jesus Christ, who hast taught us in his own Words thus to pray,

Our Father which art in Heaven, *&c.*

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